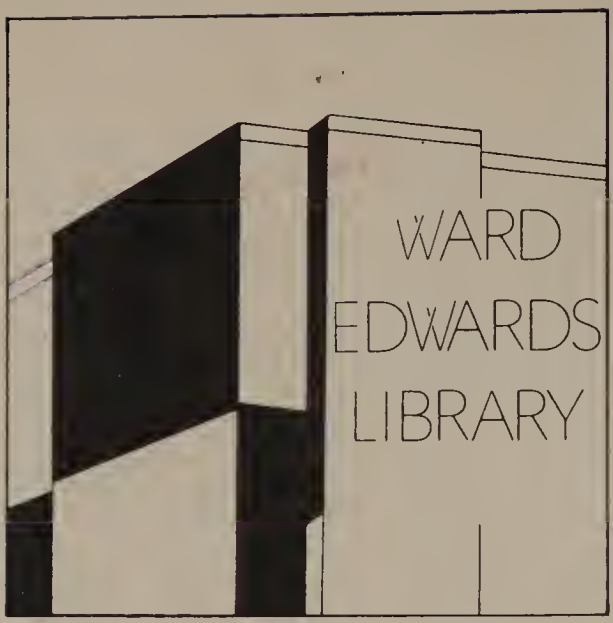

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HERRICK WILLIAM

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LOVE AND TERROR

Also by William Herrick

The Itinerant (1967)
Strayhorn, a Corrupt Among Mortals (1968)
Hermanos! (1969)
The Last to Die (1971)
Golcz (1976)
Shadows and Wolves (1980)

LOVE AND TERROR

A Novel by William Herrick

A NEW DIRECTIONS BOOK

CENTRAL MISS
STATE UNIVE
Warrensburg
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AUTHOR'S NOTE

Though the characters and events in this novel were drawn from my imagination it was an imagination informed in part by my reading of the British magazines *Anarchist Review* and *Encounter,* including translated reprints from the West German periodicals *Der Spiegel, KONKRET, Die Welt,* and *Stern.*

The report incorporated into Viktor's journal (p. 82) and initialed by G.v.R., M.G., G.R., V.X., and D.P. is a copy, with minor changes, of a document signed by Georg von Rauch, the German terrorist killed in a shootout with the West German police. This memorandum, printed in the November 1970 issue of *Encounter,* was found during a raid on the apartment of a terrorist comrade along with other documents and a Leitz-Ordner which recounted the day to day activities of their group.

W.H.

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Para Roberto, mi amigo y mi compañero

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With them, it's a case of keying themselves up to play to the whole world, or perish!

Ivan Turgenev, *On The Eve*

LOVE AND TERROR

The Aftermath

DURING THE RAID, THREE HOSTAGES WERE KILLED and several wounded. One attacking commando was killed, as well as innumerable local soldiers who were defending the old building.

Three of the terrorists escaped, though one of them, Jaime Valdés, was later captured in Italy and interrogated.

Shortly after the raid, the Swiss police, on a tip from Israeli intelligence, stormed the underground flat in Zurich of the American terrorist, Steven Gregory Wenders. Though Wenders managed to slip away, the Swiss police found along with other documents the original daily account books of both the American terrorist and his comrade, Viktor X.

Photocopies of the above were sent to the Israeli authorities who had, by other means, already obtained a copy of the entry Viktor made shortly before the raid. A copy of this entry was sent to "the three old ones," Avram ben Itzchak, Clara Z. and the American, David Grad, for it referred to them. In addition, the Israelis sent Clara Z. Wenders' and Viktor's journals and the other documents. A generous woman, Clara Z. loaned all the above to the writer, who interviewed her and taped her oral history, as well as those of Avram ben Itzchak and David Grad.

What follows is excerpted from the entry Viktor X wrote shortly before the raid.

• . . . Damn them! Their fearlessness somehow makes me remember my humanity, makes me forget my single-mindedness, softens my heart. What's a terrorist with a soft heart? Nothing! A void! A piece of shit. Pure shit!

In a few hours they're going to die. I've killed others, why should I care about them? To me the others were faceless enemies—one shoots, they fall. Faceless faces bury them and weep.

It's almost as if I were proud of these three, proud to see human beings who can rise above the degradation to which we have put them. The woman astounds me—her quiet voice, the clarity of her eyes as she speaks or looks at me. It could be said I've become infatuated with her—and she's sixty years old! To me she seems ageless. Her beauty even at that age makes Gabriele look like a bitter old woman. No wonder Gabriele's jealous. I hope, I pray, the Israelis call Haddad soon and the entire thing's over with. Even then Gabriele and Max Gruber said they'd kill the three—my old friends, she calls them. I feel as if they are. The same old embrace of the viktor with the viktim.

Goddamn them! Why do they intervene between me and my image of myself as the archangel of the Revolution, bloodied sword in hand?

When the old KGB agent looks at me it seems he can read my mind. And she—that she can read my heart. I was tempted to ask her, almost did ask her, only discipline prevented me—one must never speak to a hostage unless it's to give an order, otherwise, well, otherwise—but I wanted to ask her if the rumor were true, that she'd worked underground against Hitler during the war, and in Hamburg, and where did she live and how, did she have any children, and how did she escape? I wanted to know all about her. Why? I don't know why. I just wanted to know. Damn her! Damn them! The Amerikan Grad can't hide his contempt. It's almost as if he says, "You're scum." Strangely, his contempt is contagious. Yes, Gabriele's right. "You've got the flu again, Viktor, haven't you?" mimicking my every word, my every move. I hate her! I hate myself! It's they, the old ones. Old tired revolutionaries. Tired of the violence, the chaos, the killings, of the treacheries—those they committed, those committed against them. The old must die so that the young do not have to see their eyes—only then can the young go on. Yes, they must die! I agree with Max and Gabriele, even if we let the others go •

THE OLD ONES

Avram ben Itzchak
once known as Anton P.

HAIFA WAS HOT. THE CALM JULY SEA SHIMMERED blue with an overlay of gold. In Hamburg, what with the Elbe, the canals, and the ancient gray stone buildings, the sun had appeared to have a bluish cast. In Haifa, the sun seemed white gold.

Avram ben Itzchak sat on a wooden bench near the public beach a few miles south of the harbor. Several orange and olive trees give those who sit on the bench protection from the sun.

Avram is a shrunken little man in his mid-seventies whose rheumy eyes tend to wander when one looks at him as he speaks.

When he walks, he hobbles, since he has an artificial leg. The trousers he wears are too long and rolled at the

cuffs or else he would stumble over them and fall. They are also too large at the waist and are held to his thin body by an old belt with handmade holes.

He spoke in broken English, slowly, losing many words, but his voice was without tremor. He gave the impression he would say no more than he wished and that would be little. He only spoke because Clara, as he referred to her—she is now known as Deborah Gershon—had asked him. The hijacking had been just another incident in his long life. . . . His life—who cared?

Avram was born in 1902 in the city of Lodz, in Poland. His orthodox Jewish parents were not poor, and he went through the gymnasium, but not the university. "Not smart like Clara."

In 1919 Avram helped found the Polish Young Communist League. "The Russian Revolution," he said, his eyes suddenly wide open, staring, then abruptly closed as if to blot out the image. "The old world—pffft! A new world. . . ." He grimaced, was silent, resumed.

He was an excellent organizer and, as Anton P., became a full-time activist for the Polish Communist Party. Caught by the police in the raid of an underground meeting, he spent several years in prison. He was tortured, but, as he said, "Not much."

When the Comintern decided to organize the International Brigades in the summer of 1936, the Polish Party sent Anton P. to Spain as a political commissar of the Dombrowski (Polish) battalion, considered by many who served in Spain as the outstanding fighting unit of all the Brigades.

Anton lost a leg in the second battle for Teruel in the

winter of 1938, after having been in the front lines for fifteen months. He didn't bemoan his loss, for wasn't he still among the living when so many other comrades had died? Besides, what was a leg to a revolutionary?

He convalesced in a hospital in Sitges on the sea, just south of Barcelona. "Same sea, same trees, same white houses," he said, his thin hand floating jerkily around him.

In Sitges he met Clara Z., a young Polish comrade, who had volunteered to nurse the wounded and the dying. Amid the despair and desolation which is a wartime hospital, she was like the Catalan sun, passionate, affectionate, and very efficient. Avram now smiled for the first time. The Spanish wounded in the ward with Anton said she was *muy bonita,* and Anton guessed she was—blond and supple, with a breathtaking softness of haunch and breast.

Anton had been so zealous in his work as a revolutionary that he hadn't had much time for women, not to mention for love, but now his enforced idleness gave him time to think of how pleasant it would be to love and make love to Clara. She was twenty years old at this time and Anton in his thirties.

When Anton became ambulatory, which was sooner than expected because he was a strong healthy man, he, using crutches, and Clara would cross the road after sundown and go into the park near the sea. They would sit on a stone bench and talk about the Civil War, the Party, the Great Stalin, and on occasion about Poland, Warsaw, and even about themselves.

Once, late at night, Barcelona was bombed and they could see the flames; in their common fear and despair

they moved into each other's arms, then lay on the grass and made love. It was difficult for Anton because of his wound, but Clara, who was sophisticated in these matters, found a way, and they were happy with each other.

They fell in love—for Anton the first time. They found love in the midst of war to be extraordinarily sweet, yet also extraordinarily sad. Their passion seemed inexhaustible. Avram was now quiet for a moment, his eyes averted, the slightest of blushes on his old face.

Franco's armies were driving toward Barcelona which, when taken, would make it impossible for those in the south to escape to France. The Party thought Anton too good an organizer to lose and sent a staff car to evacuate him from Sitges. A disciplined comrade, he didn't hesitate a moment, and Clara made no move to hold him. The revolution came first, and the Party was the revolution. Somehow, somewhere, they would meet again.

In a small office in Perpignan in southern France, Anton P. worked for the Comintern, organizing the evacuation of international Party functionaries from Spain and France. Every day he awaited the arrival of Clara, but she never came.

After the defeat of the Spanish Republic, Anton was put into a French concentration camp. There he organized his comrades so they were a group apart and took care of their own. All others had to fend for themselves. "The cadres come first. Always!"

When news reached the camp that Hitler and Stalin had made a pact, thus signaling the start of World War II, Anton worked with the aid of the most stalwart to keep his comrades in line. When the Nazis occupied France, the Germans made a friendly swap with the

Russians and transported Anton to Russian-occupied Poland.

There he was immediately co-opted, as the Party says it, into the Russian secret police, the famous OGPU, predecessor to the NKVD and KGB.

He did his work well. "Socialists, anti-Stalinists, Polish nationalists—pffft!"

By now Anton's olfactory glands were so highly developed that before anyone else he smelled the coming Nazi offensive against Russia and fled to Moscow ahead of the invading German armies. There Anton remained until the end of the war, working for the secret police. "Someone complained—pffft!"

The war over, he returned with Marshal Rokossovski to Poland and in the years that followed rose high in the police hierarchy.

He now raised his head, looked one square in the eye, and said, "Very efficient in pffft!"

Several years following the Poznan uprising, after which Gomulka was released from prison and assumed power in Poland and Marshal Rokossovski returned to Moscow, Anton P. was retired. His pension amounted to six times the average wage of a steelworker. He had an apartment in Warsaw and a dacha in the country.

Drily he said, "A retired member of ruling class."

In 1968, for no reason he could discern except that it also happened to other comrades who were once Jews, he was called into the Warsaw District Party office and asked a straightforward question: Do you think it is fair for Polish workers to be paying a pension to a Jew?

His only shock was that he, Anton P., apparatchik for almost thirty years, hadn't anticipated that the question

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would be asked. He now said, "First time in almost fifty years I remember I am Jew."

Poland permitted Jews to emigrate so long as they took no more than one valise. Anton went directly home from the District office, packed a small bag, did not look behind, bought a railroad ticket for Vienna. From there he booked air passage to Israel. "All Jews welcome—even Jewish pigs."

When asked how many Jews he had sent to prison in Poland for alleged Zionism, a transgression of the law, he lowered his eyes and twitched a shoulder. In the silence that followed, his eyes wandered about the park, sought the orange on the lowest limb of an orange tree, attached themselves to the fruit—would it fall to the ground?—and then his thin shoulders trembled in a sad shrug.

Now he waited for the next question, obvious, but it did not come and he mumbled his thanks.

In Haifa he met Clara Z., also newly arrived.

In Poland they had met over the years at one Party conference or another, but had not resumed their intimacy. "Not interested—she, I."

After shaking hands, she said, "We don't deserve our good fortune." As was his way, he said nothing.

The Israeli government gives him a minimal old-age pension.

His name is again Avram to which he has added his father's name, thus Avram ben Itzchak. "Father, mother, two brothers, three sisters, their families—all killed by Nazis."

On occasion he visits with old comrades from Poland or the International Brigades, some of whom he said re-

main loyal to the old cause. "Still happy fools." He hobbles on his artificial leg from one family to another, receives a meal here, a kind word there. Once or twice a week he limps up the stairs to the flat of Clara Z. "There," he pointed across the Tel Aviv-Haifa road to a white up-ended box with balconies. She rewards him with a munificent smile.

About the hijacking he wouldn't speak. "Ask Clara." Then, his watery old eyes suddenly hardening, he added, "Those two, young German and his woman—so scared at beginning, if I had gun I could kill them in first five minutes. That's the time, the first five minutes. I know."

He would say no more.

As the interviewer turned off the tape recorder and prepared to leave, Avram looked up at him with a grim smile. "Our children," he said. "Clara's and mine." Then he laughed, a harsh, gritty laugh. Mirthless . . .

THE YOUNG ONES

Viktor and Gabriele

VIKTOR X WAS AS THEY SAY A CHILD OF THE FIRE-bombings. His parents are unknown.

In early 1945, in the devastated port of Hamburg, a city of ashes, blackened stones, and timbers, Kurt and Ilka Frankel were out with their sacks searching along the west bank of the Elbe, slate gray in the dawn, for sticks with which to kindle their iron stove.

On the stone steps of the quay, among the ruins of housing which had long since been scavenged by themselves and others in the bombed-out port, they came upon a pram lashed with a leather belt to a capstan. It was a wide belt such as dockwallopers wear, stained with sweat.

In the pram sat an infant with a shock of blond hair

and a dirty face from which blue eyes stared with an almost terrifying calmness. With stubby fingers he was picking his nose and bringing the crisp black nuggets to his mouth.

"Mutti," he said, reaching out a dirty hand.

The note pinned to his yellow blanket read: Please take him. He is a healthy child. His parents died valiantly for the Cause.

What cause? Nazism? Freedom? Socialism? Whatever. The Frankels, deep into middle age, their own two sons long dead in a Hitler prison camp, nodded to one another and took the child.

They named him Viktor—in honor of Hitler's imminent defeat and their certainty that freedom would now conquer.

Viktor. Viktor Frankel. A child of the firebombings. Of war. A child of ineffable serenity broken on rare occasions as he grew when, with a muted cry, he would run to Ilka, throw himself into her arms and anneal himself to her flesh, lose himself in her ample bosom, hold on as if for life.

An intelligent child, healthy, strong, he took longer than usual to speak, but when he did in full sentences, no stutter, articulate. Serene. Calm. "Mutti, mutti," melting into her flesh. Waking at night, parched, burning, a pitcher of water, thirst quenched, smiling quietly, serene, calm sleep.

He grew. Handsome, athletic, brilliant in school, honors, a baccalaureate, young women. And as he grew, West Germany prospered, rebuilt. Hamburg grew into the largest saltwater port in all of Europe. Kurt Frankel became a leader in the seamen's union, Ilka Frankel in

the dockworkers' union. They loved their son. He loved them. "Viktor was a very good boy."

Before he was to go to the university for his doctorate, it was decided he should go to sea for a year on a freighter to learn what it was to work as a wage earner. "To know the meaning of sweat and calloused hands, of tired muscles after a day's labor."

When Viktor stepped from the gangway to the freighter which was to be both his home and workplace, he was, though already in his early twenties, still a boy, a schoolboy. When he stepped off the same gangway a year later, Ilka Frankel said, "My God, our Viktor's a man."

Kurt, remembering his own youth, said sadly, "And soon gone for good."

Viktor, deeply tanned, looked taller, stronger. The athlete's muscles were gone, in their place the lumpy balled muscles of a hardworking man; his hands were calloused, his forearms muscled with thick rope. His jaw seemed squarer, his cheeks tauter, his eyes bluer in the tanned face and sunk deeper under the scarp of his forehead. First he stood staring at them, a little cool smile on his full lips, then, as if remembering the amenities, swept Ilka into his arms, felt her softness, thought how old she'd gotten, squeezed her to himself, kissed her aging cheeks. "It's good to see you, Mutti." With a long strong finger he wiped the tear from her eye.

Then he turned to Kurt, coolly appraised him, saw how old he, too, had gotten, said, "There isn't a German seaman who doesn't say you're the best goddamned union boss in the world. They need you—there isn't a country

in the world that can't use you and Mother." And then he embraced Kurt, felt his aging muscles, and Kurt shed a tear also, for as a boy Viktor had rarely been demonstrative with him.

It was to be a quick visit, a month, for Viktor had registered in the Free University at Dahlem where he would in two years, he hoped, stand for his doctorate in political science. As he told his parents, he wanted to carry on from where they would soon be leaving off.

"We're living off the fat here," he said. "But out there —out there the poverty's enough to make a man vomit."

They were pleased, happy, he was their son; he would someday do great things.

For them the month went too quickly, for him, it seemed, not quickly enough. He was impatient to leave, to get started. Beneath the serenity, the calmness, the Frankels saw a new Viktor—tough, cold, distant. It saddened them, and they pretended not to see it—he was still their little boy—but it became obvious to them that he resented their solicitude for his welfare, his comfort. And late at night, in their bed, Kurt repeated to Ilka what he had said on Viktor's homecoming, "He'll soon be gone for good."

Ilka sighed, "It's only natural . . . a healthy sign."

"I suppose."

Viktor, not insensitive, tried to conceal his impatience with them, but when he saw how bereft they looked the night before his departure for Dahlem, he had what for him was an abrupt and startling loss of temper.

"Why don't you stop this crap? After a year at sea, I thought you'd be prepared for it. But now it seems it's worse. Get it into your heads, I'm leaving. I'm on my own now."

The look of dismay on their faces infuriated him even more—the good little Viktor wasn't being very good—so he turned his back on them and stormed out to walk the waterfront streets. Then to stop at a raucous tavern for a beer and to ogle the topless dancers. Then to pick up a half-naked bar girl and go with her to her room for a quick trip around the world. Then to stroll along the Elbe and stop at the quay where they'd found him some twenty-four years before. There to sit atop the capstan and muse about his life.

It was right here they'd found him, the pram lashed to this very capstan. They'd told him about it a hundred times, the early dawn, the smell of acrid smoke still hanging in air, the Elbe flowing quietly, slate gray, not a barge in sight, and no matter how often they proved to him they loved him he was for years afraid that they also would abandon him. They had wanted much from him—success at school, popularity with schoolmates, all the things parents want from a child—and he had worked hard to give them what they'd wanted; they loved him, he loved them, but still he'd been afraid. Mutti, mutti, I love you. Finally, he had learned to accept it—they were his parents; he was their child—and now they wouldn't let him go, and he wished they would. Why couldn't they accept it—let him go? Who were his real parents anyway? Oh, to hell with it. He'd had enough of that crap, worried about it for half his lifetime. He should have stayed at sea. He missed the ship, the hard day-to-day work, the men he had worked with, their daily petty gripes, their fights, their rough humor, the wild times they'd had ashore, the stinks and aromas which distinguished each port from the other—piss and wine in Marseilles, piss and pizza in Naples, guano and

coffee beans in Santos—musty bales of rags, fresh airy bales of raw cotton, the hot coffee on a cold night, ice-cold beer when the sun merged with the sea like a molten furnace, the sad women who plied their trade, sometimes a rare beauty, a man could never seem to have his fill, more, always wanting more and more. And the abject poverty of southern Italy, of Africa, of Latin America. No, he had to go to the university; there was much to do in this stinking world and he wanted to understand how to do it. He must find his own way—not their way, his own. And Kurt and Ilka would have to get used to it. Accept it. Like all other parents had to accept it. He was all they had left in the world. Too bad. They had lived their lives, he would live his.

Years later, he told the American Weatherman, Steve Wenders, "The break had come, but I had to keep reassuring myself of its reality. What came later was only the excuse I needed to make it final."

When Viktor returned home late that night, Ilka and Kurt were still up. He could see they had talked—discussed him. Now they would tell him he was right, ask his forgiveness; they had to give him his freedom, and in that way they would try to bind him closer, by showing him what good parents they were. A man couldn't win—not with his parents anyway. And they did and said exactly what he thought they would. The old Viktor, Viktor the boy, would have smiled, begged *their* forgiveness for having lost his temper, but now he didn't. He forgave them. Without a smile. They were hurt, but he didn't care.

In the morning, before he left for the train station, as they said their good-byes they looked so old, damn them,

he had to relent. He kissed them, told them not to worry, Dahlem was only a hop, skip. With a wave of the hand, a fleeting smile, he left.

He was free at last. But it took him two years to punctuate it with an exclamation mark.

GABRIELE STRELSIN'S SILVER PORSCHE WAS AN EXclamation mark. She drove it 125 kph from Frankfurt to Dahlem. She would have driven it faster, except it was a new car and she didn't want to burn it out too soon.

"We're so fucking rich," Gabriele said in the style of her set, "Mutti can buy out Pucci, Gucci, Ricci, and Chanel with her pocket money."

Huge plane trees surrounded the Strelsin mansion in Frankfurt, soaring cypresses bordered their villa in Cannes—"A *real* villa, not one of those pastel plaster shit boxes"—and giant blue spruce stood arrogant guard at the entrance to their Alpine chalet.

Servants had reared Gabriele—changed her panties, bathed her, dressed her, saddled her horses, waxed her cars. She flew her own plane. Mother and Father played with her, rode with her, skied with her, sailed with her, laughed with her. The servants were strict—on order. Mother and Father broke all the rules. One foot danced; the other paid strict attention.

Whether at private school in Frankfurt or finishing school in Paris, Gabriele led her class. Agile brain, quick

tongue. She did her lessons in half the time it took her peers, so the other half could be taken with play. All marveled at her speedy efficiency. She wasted no time.

She rarely offered her lips to kiss, only her cheek. Still, as an American ski bum whom she picked up on the slopes of St. Moritz told a friend, "She's sure as hell steamy. And that nifty uptilted ass of hers can do a mean gavotte. But don't move in sideways on her or she'll rip your eyes out and roast them on a spit. . . . One of those lucky dames—if you or I want snow, it rains. Not her. She snaps her fingers and there it is. . . ."

Gabriele was rock honest, straightforward in her discourse and friendship with others—disarming for one so rich, so beautiful, so arrogant. Gold Gabriele, the gossips called her—through and through.

She listened to what one had to say, and, despite her quickness, was patient with those slower-witted. Then, with the most imperceptible of sighs, she told one exactly what she had to say. Even the timid and the shy admired and respected her. She tolerated Mother, adored Father, loved her animals—a dog, a horse.

Before entering the Free University to study Marxism with Adorno and Revolution with Marcuse (it piqued her father's sense of humor), Gabriele advised Martin Strelsin—a Herculean figure in blue pinstripe—that she was to stand for her doctorate in economics, then enter Strelsin Aktiengesellschaft and run the damned thing. Martin laughed. My father, the laughing man. "I'll teach you," she said, ignoring his laugh, "that it's profitable to pay your employees the highest wages." He laughed again. Gabriele permitted him to embrace her and kiss her lips.

As would be expected of the son of Ilka and Kurt Frankel, Viktor assumed a leading role in the university chapter of the Social Democratic Party. He considered Otto Kampfmann and his fellow Kommunards "wild ones," politically irresponsible, obscene in their madness, and the Trotskyites and other dissident Communist groups as too dogmatically Leninist-Marxist. Besides, as he wrote in a paper which infuriated one of his professors, "Whenever confronted by the option of either telling the truth or lying, Lenin never hesitated: he chose the lie. It has become a cornerstone of Communist organization ever since." Though a Social Democrat, Viktor admitted to being attracted to the Anarchist philosophy of Prince Kropotkin, and fascinated by the violent Anarchism of Bakunin. "After what I've seen, if I were a Neapolitan or Moroccan or an American Negro, I wouldn't hesitate a moment: I would take up arms. If I were a citizen of an Eastern European country, I'd spend every moment of my life fabricating bombs with which to bring down the citadel of the counter-revolution: the Kremlin."

Irene Erhardt, a friend from Hamburg also at the Free University, wrote Viktor's old girl friend, Lisl Gass, "Your dear old Vik has changed. Remember how everyone used to wonder at his unruffled serenity, his infuriating calmness in time of crisis—strange for a child of the bombings everyone said. Well, now he's less calm, less serene, but very cold. He crackles like ice. Brrr. He struts around with a certain arrogance—he's seen the world, is smarter, older, and handsomer, too. However, some of my women friends tell me he's as upstanding as ever in bed. Damn him, he won't give me more than a

big-brother smile. They say he likes big tits, and here I am alas. . . ."

As for Gabriele Strelsin, she had no time for politics. Politics, she said, was for workers and managers and tradespeople. Strelsins stood above politics. Money and steel are commodities sought by all, regardless of creed or ideology. The East, the West, the so-called Underdeveloped, free and unfree, no matter, money is money, and so is steel. It is true, the unions had forced their way into the management councils of the German Federal Republic. But Martin Strelsin ruled with an arrogant, arbitrary hand. Some day Gabriele would rule with a more even, more patient hand. "There is no reason why the working class and the managerial class cannot share power and its rewards," she wrote. "Monopoly power degrades both the economy and the individual. Pluralistic power, with a democratic state as arbiter, will assure both honest competition and political freedom."

The paper written and submitted, Gabriele vaulted into her silver Porsche and sped to St. Moritz for a week of skiing and sharing of her golden charms with whomsoever. "Men have always done it. Now it's our turn. Undifferentiated sex they call it. I call it uncomplicated fucking. Why give it a fancy name?"

Viktor Frankel had been born during cataclysm, thrown upon the planet by a violent eruption of the earth and reared by the first man and woman who had found him. Now he was young, handsome, intelligent, and the envy of his peers as he strolled among them with his strange stiff-backed grace.

Gabriele Strelsin, it would seem, had been thrice-

blessed: beauty, brains, and money. "No," she would say, "brains come first. With brains you can make all the money you want. And with money you can buy beauty—also all you want. I can tell you a thing or two about some of those famous beauties in my parents' crowd," and she'd laugh.

Now, during Viktor's and Gabriele's last year at the Free University, while both were preparing to stand for their doctorates, *Die Rote Fahne,* a periodical published by a dissident Communist group, printed a list on which appeared the names of Kurt Frankel and Martin Strelsin. In 1931, even before Hitler was voted into power, Kurt Frankel, a young Socialist, had quit his party and joined the Nazi Jugend. Martin Strelsin had in 1937 joined the National Socialist Party and, so far as anyone could learn, had never left it. The list contained fifty names of men in industry and politics with similar past links to the Nazis.

Some called the furor which followed a witch-hunt. Others, more rational, said there were and are no witches, but there were and are Nazis.

In the week that followed, Viktor on entering a lecture room for a seminar was accosted by a friend who pointed a finger and began to ask a question. Viktor threw a seaman's roundhouse and broke the man's jaw. He asked those present if there were any further questions. Receiving none, he marched from the room.

Gabriele raised an arrogant chin, thinned her chiseled lips, and shimmered with restrained heat. As she sat having lunch in a small café off campus, a well-known campus revolutionary, walking by with a friend, stopped and spat in Gabriele's face. She did not as the ski bum

had predicted go for his eyes. She picked up a heavy metal plate and swung it at his gullet. He almost choked to death.

As yet not known to each other except by name, Viktor and Gabriele simultaneously decided to return home to confront their shame.

AS VIKTOR SAT IN THE TRAIN COMPARTMENT, HE couldn't read the book he'd brought. He couldn't even think. Something had broken loose inside; the gears wouldn't mesh; the engine wouldn't work; he was out of control.

Though he had already asserted his independence, still he was bound to them, and now this had happened. It was almost as if it had been their doing—stay close, we need you—and he would have to comfort them, coddle them, when what he wanted was to cut loose. Damn them. There was always something. It was their fault. He was so angry he couldn't even see the humor of it. *Their* fault. *Their* doing.

When they had picked him off the street, adopted him, reared him as their own child, they hadn't done it out of kindness to him—a dirty-faced little brat they'd found in a pram—he'd been no different from a piece of firewood they'd scrounged to keep them warm. It hadn't been *him* they had wanted—any child would have done. It wasn't as if they had given him birth.

Across from him in the compartment a sleek middle-class couple opened plastic bags, pulled out brat-

wurst, bread, pickles—their hands all greasy, their fat lips chewing, smacking their lips, smirking. He was overcome by rage; he wanted to lean over and push the food down their fat throats, choke them on it. He felt himself trembling; his throat was parched; the thoughts going round in his head not his own but of some other Viktor, a Viktor who had lain quiescent, chained, hidden, and who now wanted, demanded, to replace the old Viktor.

Yet he kept repeating to himself that Kurt, who had always spoken of the Nazis with contempt, with vitriolic hatred, could never have been a Nazi. *Die Rote Fahne* had lied, and then he said to himself, no, it is true, and his rage again made him blind and he wanted to tear the train apart, spit in the fat faces across the way. He smashed his fist against the compartment wall; they stared at him, mouths open, and he glared back. But they weren't Kurt and they weren't Ilka.

Kurt Frankel had sailed the seas for many years. Smart, honest, he'd fought his way to a high position in the seamen's union. Seamen aren't known for their dainty ways. He'd bloodied many a man's head and had himself been bloodied. He had survived the loss of two sons, had survived the firebombings, survived the war. Kurt was a tough old man.

Ilka was no less strong. She'd been brought up on the waterfront of Hamburg, as rough a seaport as there is in the world. She'd gone into the dockworkers' union as a secretary and, through intelligence, shrewd political infighting, and hardheadedness, had become one of its leaders, one woman among many men. It was said she could spike a two hundred twenty-five pound dockwall-

oper to the wall with a string of obscenities as long as the Elbe. Once she took a belaying pin to a drunken stevedore who had come in swinging, and they had to carry him out feet first. Her parents had been Communists who were killed in a Hitler labor camp; her two sons socialists, also killed by Hitler. Her sister Olga had worked in the Communist underground against der Führer and had been betrayed by her own comrades when she'd objected to the Pact. Olga's husband Mark was a Communist who'd been killed by Stalin. Ilka had survived them all. She wasn't a timid old lady.

As the train rolled into Hamburg, Viktor was more or less sane. They would have a quiet discussion; they would reassure him; they were fine, forget it, return to the university. He would have a hot meal—Ilka was a good cook—he would see the comfortable old furniture, the same pictures on the walls, the gloomy Käthe Kollwitz prints which still moved him, would sleep in his own bed, and in the morning they would say their good-byes, and he would return to Dahlem. There he would write a piece that would shut them all up.

And it was as he imagined it. They greeted him warmly; the house smelled of boeuf bourgignon, one of his favorite dishes; the easy chair wrapped him in its old worn arms, and they talked.

Perhaps they talked too long. Perhaps he asked one question too many.

Kurt and Ilka sat on the ancient sofa, he in one corner, she in the other, both older, tired looking—Viktor guessed they'd been talking about the list for days—the room lighted warmly by the lamps, first one speak-

ing, then the other. Yes, Kurt had joined the Nazis in '31, he thought perhaps they would have the answer to all the terrible problems, but he was out by the time Hitler took power, when he realized they were anti-human, more, inhuman, nonhuman, beasts. He, Kurt, hadn't done anything dreadful himself, and after the war he hadn't concealed his brief involvement—his union colleagues knew about it, his party colleagues, too. He had said his *mea culpas;* the press and the new left were blowing it up out of proportion, and it all seemed silly, the entire uproar at the university. So they talked, and should have stopped, and they should have gone in to have a plate of stew with potatoes and a big glass of wine, but somehow Viktor couldn't stop asking questions, why did so many people keep their mouths shut, and going on about the Jews, what the Nazis did to them, and then he asked, "And the Jews? What did you do on *Kristallnacht?"*

Kurt and Ilka looked at each other, looked at him. Why was he asking this question? They should have answered immediately, but didn't. Perhaps they were taken aback. Perhaps they felt guilty. Perhaps Viktor's rage was returning.

"Why do you look at each other? Why do you look at me like that?"

"Do I have to answer a stupid question like that?" Kurt said, the hurt on his face apparent.

And Viktor said, "If you think it's stupid, good, you don't have to answer it."

"I don't have to answer to anyone. Not even you." Kurt's great shoulders were trembling, his suddenly fisted hands shook, knuckles white.

"You don't, that's right. They say it's a free country."

Ilka saw the upcoming storm and intervened, "On *Kristallnacht* we bolted the door, put out the lights—"

"And hid—like the goddamned cowards you were!"

That did it. Kurt stood, his face ashen, his lips quivering. And Viktor stood, his head bursting with the onrush of blood.

"Idiots—both of you!" Ilka shouted in her dockwalloper's voice as she clambered heavily to her feet, the gray bun on the back of her head bobbing, her heavy breasts rising and falling, her strong face filled with anger, with despair, looking first at one, then at the other. She was moving towards them when Kurt said what he'd be sorry for until the day he died, "You ungrateful little bastard—you're bilge, pure bilge!"

And Viktor was shouting, "And you're a Nazi pig, a hypocrite, a labor faker." Ilka was screaming at both of them to shut up, to sit down, but Kurt had stepped forward and raised his heavy fist, and Viktor had stepped forward and raised his, and they struck at each other before Ilka could rush between them. Kurt went down, and she knelt to him, her husband, and Viktor called her a filthy name, and left them that way, on the floor, in each other's arms.

In Dahlem the next day, Viktor bought a Leitz-Ordner, a ledger book, and made his first entry:

• A hollow victory. A hollow freedom.
I don't know where it will lead me.
I am my own father. I am X.
Ungrateful little bastard, pure bilge.
Shit, he meant. Pure shit.
That's me. Viktor X.— •

IN CANNES, AS HIS DAUGHTER GABRIELE STARED FIRST dismayed, then with anger at his back, Martin Strelsin, looking out beyond the bougainvillea, laughed and laughed. He laughed so hard, tears glazed his broad tanned cheeks.

She had only asked, "Is it true?"

Around the curve of the high privet and laurel, through the towering cypress, the Mediterranean glimmered green-gold. In the long curved driveway, the engine of Gabriele's powerful Porsche was still hot.

Though previously informed that her daughter was arriving, Mother was out shopping—Mother was always shopping—in Nice.

In the spacious sunlit salon, standing near the Bechstein grand, Gabriele, in jeans, cotton halter, elegant sandals, observed her father laughing. She'd driven as fast as she could without getting killed—without even stopping to eat—still angry with herself for not having succeeded in decapitating the idiot in the café, thinking about her father, worrying about him, angry with him, angry with herself, and filled with love and hate had run into his arms. Laughing, he kissed her.

"That business about your having been a Nazi—is it true?"

He laughed.

"Be serious. Please."

He laughed and laughed.

He never laughed at Boris, her cousin. He never laughed at managers, dinner guests, visitors, dignitaries. He laughed at her mother. He laughed at her. Had made a show dog out of mother. Wanted to make a show horse out of her. Laugh, go ahead, laugh, you bastard!

He and she had skied, ridden horses, played tennis,

flown, driven fast cars, played and laughed and loved together. Serious talk with mother, with her, oh, no, he laughed. She was a grown woman, had asked him a serious question, now he laughed and laughed.

Oh, yes, he loved her, no doubt about that.

What sort of love? The kind one doesn't talk about. Secret, unholy love, oh, yes, no doubt about that.

Once . . . was it only once? . . . almost but not quite . . . sun going down . . . sea calm . . . sailboats lolling easily . . . their beach empty but for them . . . naked, taking the sun . . . behind them the cypress whispered . . . only their breathing, their eyes, their agape mouths speaking unspoken words. He was very serious then. If she'd moved a muscle, blinked an eye, he would have moved, too. Of that she was certain, yes, certain . . . no laughter, only his fast breathing, and his eyes, his burning eyes. But fear stiffened her as his desire had stiffened him . . . bold, evil, quivering arrow . . . nauseating fear, and she ran, ran . . . to live with evil fantasies and dreams. Her own father, the laughing man. He never said a word. Laughed and laughed. Perhaps they should have sinned. Humbled, they might have been able to live in peace. Or in panic. Or in hell. Now she hated him, laugh you Nazi bastard laugh. Power hungry megalomaniac. Son-of-a-bitch bastard, oh, if she could only hurt him, whip him, beat him until he pleaded, begged for mercy. . . .

"Damn you!" she shouted at his back. "Turn around!"

Strelsin stopped laughing, wheeled to stare at her from under heavy, prematurely white brows. Christ, she was really mad, better answer the kid.

"Don't be a fool," he said, serious now. "I was a poor metallurgist, and I could see they were stupid, self-

destructive, born losers. How would I know the rest of the world would be even stupider? I saw my chance and took it. A war economy requires steel. When they finally brought the world down on their heads, there was little I didn't know about steel fabrication and international trade. I took my chance and won. They lost, not me."

It was a typical Martin Strelsin speech, and if he had responded in this way when she had come in tired, anxious, half-loving, she would have accepted it for what it was. But he had demeaned her, and now she felt he had done so for the last time, for whatever reason. Perhaps she'd grown up at last, and she could see beyond the father to the man, could see him for what he was, a selfish, arrogant, overbearing bastard who thought she was nothing, a little girl, a toy, an object of desire, a mere cunt.

Coldly, mockingly, she said, "And Germany, the country you love so much?"

"Ah, fuck Germany. Come off it."

Give him the stiletto. Deep. "Thank you, I will." Her laugh was metallic.

"Gabriele!"

"You're shocked? Good. And the Jews, Herr Strelsin?"

"What makes you suddenly interested in Jews?"

"It's true, we've rarely talked about Jews at home. But it's no longer a secret. Tell me about the Jews, dear father?"

"I had nothing to do with the final solution. I wasn't SS or Gestapo—nor in the chemical industry. It wasn't *my* gas they used. The fact is—" and he grinned. A bad mistake for the usually shrewd Martin Strelsin.

His daughter waited. Patient Gabriele.

"The fact is, I concealed the identity of two metallurgists, A-1, Jews. I needed them in my work. I'll give you their names—check them out. To win one must use every first rate brain one can buy. Hitler—that whole crowd—were irrational. The lot of them. . . ."

"Not you, of course."

"Not me. The Nazis were a grubby lot. Pure blood, what dreck. I joined, signed a card, paid my dues, heiled, that was all. You know I'm an apolitical man."

Now it was Gabriele who laughed—laughed until tears ran down her golden cheeks. It was his turn to stare. Was she laughing at *him?*

Abruptly she stopped, stood quivering before him.

"You goddamned fucking hypocrite. You mean amoral, not apolitical. Power, money, politics, that's all you live for. Except play, of course. To play with your little wife, to play with your little girl. You've made Mutti into a beautiful mannequin and me into a toy. You laugh and laugh and laugh and laugh, you . . . you . . . . Goddamn you, I don't even know how to love. I fuck like a machine. . . ."

"Gabriele! Stop it! We were talking about Nazis, why are you saying this?"

"Why don't you laugh? I repeat it: *I fuck like a machine.* Yes, it's true. You wince? Good. Wince some more. Go fortify yourself with money. . . . Don't touch me . . . no! You put your hands on me, I'll kill you!" She stood beating her thigh with a fist, beating it and beating it and beating it, and Martin Strelsin stood flat-footed, his mouth open, not knowing which way to turn. . . .

"You're using this as an excuse to break away, to . . ."

Gabriele, feeling the onset of tears, of defeat, shouted,

"Go fuck yourself," wheeled and fled. A sandal thong snapped, the sole slipslapping the tiles as she ran, the bastard, the bastard. . . .

Martin followed quickly after her, Christ, what's wrong with her, but she was too fast. The Porsche engine hummed, then roared a fierce salutation as Gabriele gunned it down the driveway, curved with a screech of rubber, and disappeared.

Martin stood shaking his head for a few moments, then turned back to the villa. "She's still young, she'll get over it. I'll send her a bracelet."

Collecting his tennis gear, he strolled to his private court where the pro awaited him. Too bad Gabriele hadn't stayed, he would have enjoyed trouncing her.

A week later his bracelet was returned wrapped in a page proof of a centerfold of *STEEL,* a radical magazine patterned after the American *Playboy.* It revealed a nude Gabriele lying seductively on the draped red flag of the revolution.

"For My Father, the Laughing Man. With love, Gabriele."

Martin Strelsin flew his private plane to West Berlin, went directly to Gabriele's apartment near Wannsee. She wasn't in, and he was informed she hadn't been in for over a week. He drove to Dahlem, to the university, and inquired there, was informed that Gabriele Strelsin had already submitted her doctoral dissertation, which no doubt would be accepted since she was a brilliant scholar —her presence was not required. Since he knew none of her friends, little of her habits, he went back to West Berlin and waited for three days. She did not return.

Finally, he gave up and flew back to Cannes; he had a tennis tournament to play in.

Margarete Strelsin, who knew even less about her daughter than Martin, consoled him. "Don't worry, she'll manage. As you can see from the picture, she's a big girl now."

"As for the emotional concentration of our anger," a campus radical wrote, "it is a matter of indifference what its sources are—even if it is a rage which derives from drugs, we must be able to incorporate it."

Viktor, who had at last exploded, come loose, been set free, joined Kommune I, the most radical group in Dahlem. Radical = root. With them thought was trigger to the action. With action they wished to destroy the roots of their society: power, privilege, the idolization of things, law, order, inequity among classes, hypocrisy.

He wrote in his Leitz-Ordner:

• I live only inside myself, with no lies, no hypocrisy. Since I have no knowledge of the two who fucked, gave me birth, then ran, I am X, the unknown quantity. Malcolm X was black; I am his white counterpart. I am what I make myself.

Those who found me and didn't turn me aside gave me the name Viktor—for the victory of socialism. So Viktor I shall be. Viktor X.

Up to now I have lived the life they wanted for me. Decent, stolid, smiling when I wanted to cry out, saying yes when I'd have preferred to say no. Like them, a hypocrite.

All *good* folks are hypocrites who conceal their true thoughts and emotions. Rage must be contained; we must live with reason, they say. That's the first hypocrisy. Shit. Pure shit. There is no reason, only rationalization for one's point of view. Since the first fig leaf was tied on to conceal a man's cock and balls, a woman's purple slit—language, too, must be liberated—men and women have lived with hypocrisy. We must rip off the fig leaf, reveal our beastliness. And begin anew.

That is the first truth.

At the second meeting, I again met Gabriele Strelsin, now Rainer. I asked her why Rainer, and she said, "Because I like the way it sounds better than Strelsin, that's all." She is gold from head to toe. Quick, intelligent, honest. Strangely, since she told me she was to appear in a *STEEL* centerfold, she has covered her body with clumsy baggy trousers and an overly large sweater which conceals the shapeliness of her breasts and buttocks—nonsense, her tits and ass, that's the naked truth—so that to see her one must look into her eyes. They are agate blue. By dressing that way, she says, she's become free of men's primary interest. "Sex is a necessity, that's all. Like eating, shitting, sleeping. Why waste time on it? Love's a romantic idiocy invented by the bourgeoisie. Another exploitation, a hindrance to a revolutionary." She says she sleeps with whom she chooses, when she chooses.

She wears her hair atop her head tied with a ribbon so the overflowing gold makes it look like a sheaf of ripe wheat. In repose, her face is sulky, so she looks like the proverbial rich brat. But when she smiles, it is pure sunshine. She can interchange the sulk and the smile so rapidly, one becomes a little dizzy looking at her.

"No matter what we do," she said, "they'll only demean us by saying we're children rebelling against our parents. So

we might as well go all the way." From sulk to sunshine, blink, blink. "It's a game—the whole fucking business of life. This," referring to Kommune I, "ought to be lots of fun."

She's full of bravado, half-adolescent, half-adult (she's about twenty-two), going on about the way she upset her father (about whom she rants on endlessly). In her eyes I can see naked rage.

After the meeting she asked me to go to her flat, but I had to refuse because I was engaged elsewhere, with Vanessa Dietrich, who is also to appear in the *STEEL* centerfold. Vanessa's more my type, like little Lisl, ample, voluptuous, something to grab hold of, to fuck until the cock crows. Unfortunately, Vanessa really prefers Otto Kampfmann, one of the leaders of Kommune I, whom I've not yet met personally. Gabriele shrugged, strolled over to another comrade, smiled sunnily at him, tipped her sheaf of ripe wheat towards his ear, said a few words. He laughed, took her by the elbow and they left. I watched her long sinuous body, which the baggy trousers can't conceal no matter how hard she tries, slink through the door and felt regret.

I balled Vanessa until she screamed. •

AS MARCUSE LECTURED INSIDE ON THE INALIENABLE right to make revolution, on the outside, the darkness lit by burning torches, Otto Kampfmann, tall, obese, dirty, his pigtail swinging wildly, encouraged a crowd of students to burn the university seal. *Veritas. Justitia. Libertas.* Viktor stood at the side with Gabriele, who kept shouting, "Let's go, let's go."

Viktor still felt alien to the crowd—they were scrubby, unruly, screaming—and as Kampfmann kept exhorting

them, "There is no truth. There is no justice. There is no liberty," Viktor felt uncomfortable with the rhetoric, the demagogy, the indiscipline, and wished he were elsewhere. This is utter nonsense, he thought. Unreal. Children led by a piper, and a dirty one at that. But he forced himself to stay. It was a crowd, and he wanted to be part of the crowd. Above all not to feel alone.

Some men were climbing up the facade of the administration building, and soon they were ripping the huge wooden shield loose, dropping it to waiting hands.

"Burn it! Burn it!" Otto Kampfmann screamed.

"Burn it!" screamed Gabriele.

"Burn it!" screamed a thousand voices.

"Burn it," called Viktor, trying to become part of the crowd.

And burn it, they did. *Veritas, Justitia, Libertas* throwing up large flames, as the crowd war whooped and danced wildly like the American Indians they'd seen in a hundred movies.

As Gabriele war whooped and danced, Viktor followed along, part of it, not part of it, still recalcitrant, still not wholly one with the crowd.

Sirens were heard; the police arrived, heavy rubber truncheons in their hands. Now the crowd formed an irregular line on one side, as the police grouped on the other. One rock was thrown, then an avalanche. The police marched forward in a phalanx, cursing, swinging their truncheons, and suddenly with a roar Viktor was free, wildly so, with the joy of combat, of flowing blood, with the forgetting of all reason. He was throwing rocks, then grappling with a policeman, feeling his strength, letting it go, enjoying the power of his muscles, and

above the encircling din he could hear Gabriele laughing wildly. He had knocked down the policeman, was kicking him, when he saw Gabriele throwing rocks with unerring aim. Good for Gabriele. A policeman came at her, tried to grab her; Viktor ran towards them, body-checked the bull, clasped Gabriele's hand in his, and together they made a run for it, both unscathed. . . .

• Exhilarated, we went to her apartment and made love. I was right. Naked, she's glorious—long, slender, perfectly formed thighs. And her tits spring out at you like tiger cubs. But the way she made love—quick, efficient, almost as if she thought it a biological compulsion best satisfied quickly, got over with. Damn it, I wanted more. A spasm, another spasm, that's it. As I lay unhappy, she cried out for her father, trembled, sobbed. I turned my back on her. Cursed her roundly, fell asleep myself. What a waste of time.

However, it ended satisfactorily. In the morning we learned that the newspapers, the radio, and television were filled with our revolutionary act. We remarked how great it was not only to take part in an action, but then to read about it, hear about it, see it replayed on television. We were sure we saw ourselves, though it was really too dark. We laughed at ourselves, again made love. It was no better, but this time I didn't care. •

Viktor defended his dissertation with great skill, as had Gabriele before him, though he no longer believed much that he had written. When he concluded, he boldly told the professors on his committee that with skill one could defend any position, it was only a matter of point of view. "I've become an anarchist," he told them. "I believe in no authority, least of all yours. Though each of you is a Marxist of one sort or another, you're a bunch of cowardly swine."

They smiled at him, patted him on the head, Herr Doktor Viktor Frankel, and he left in a rage.

Day by day, he could feel himself loosening up, letting it out, and it exhilarated him.

• I'm becoming free. I want to feel, that's all, feel. When I threw stones at the bulls, grappled with them, I felt. To feel is to be alive. Once you say, I think, you're enslaved. Gabriele's afraid of feeling, that's why she makes love so quickly. With her it's only a spasm. I love no one, while she needs to love someone. She seems totally unaware that she needs love. She reveals it by a tender word, a tender gesture. She laughs frequently, yet not when we fuck. There she's all business, efficient, quick. In bed with a woman, I want to play, to laugh, to make it go on forever so that there's pain to the pleasure. Without pain, there is no pleasure—at least for me.

In her sleep, Fraulein Doktor Gabriele cries. When I wake her, she doesn't remember that she has cried. "Leave me alone," she mumbles, pushing me away, and goes right back to sleep. She enjoys her bad dreams as I enjoy pain.

Afterwards, I lie awake. Like Gabriele, right now I'm not at ease with my new life, with my urgent need to become a new Viktor, Viktor X. Though I rush madly forward, I'm afraid I'm going to stumble, break my neck.

Sturdy, serene Viktor X. I'm a raging battlefield—artillery, missiles, tanks, aerial fragmentation bombs, automatic handguns, search and miss, search and destroy. I screech, I scream, I howl—a wounded veteran of every stinking battle, of every won and unwon war. Everyone seems to know the answer, except me. I hem and haw, turn left, turn right, march up the middle torn in two. Two? Three, four, five. A hundred. I gather my balls in one hand, my guts in the other, and rush on. I manage. I survive. For another battle, another war. I hate myself as much as the next fool, and love myself more. I think constantly of death, yet I don't want to die. My head searches out the last sliver of sun; my eyes

sparkle at the first blade of new green grass; my ears fan out at the trill of a nightingale; my heart leaps as I find an earthworm fat in the winter's thaw for my fishing hook. Hypocrite! The scream echoes in my skull. I look out at the world with angry eyes, yet I think when all I want is to feel. Sorrow, pain, anger. When I scream out with pain, all about me is silence. In the end I'll vanquish the earth laid out in a shroud, for what you can't defeat, you join. I'll be at peace then, at rest. Have the last laugh. Yeoooooow! •

THE OLD ONES

David Grad

DAVID GRAD IS A BURLY SIXTY-TWO-YEAR-OLD WITH A tanned bald head and the high cheekbones of a Russian Tatar.

"A fucking cossack got into the pants of one of my grandmothers during a pogrom," he says, the vaguest tinge of a Russian accent edging in under the American vernacular. In the slits of his eyes the blue is alive as he grins, then says, "That Gabriele, I'd have loved to sneak into her pants. What a dish!"

His shoes off, his bald head perspiring, he is sitting high up on his bed in a modern hotel off Ditzengoff in Tel Aviv, sipping from a tall glass of ice-cold orange juice. He is a garrulous man, and it is obvious if permitted he would go on for hours, growing more fanciful as he loped along.

One knows immediately he will say exactly what he thinks, and a lot of it.

There are old scars on the dome of his head, and several knuckles on his hands look as if they'd once been broken.

When he was ten, his parents left revolutionary Russia behind and came to the United States. "For a long time I was sore as hell at them for leaving the Soviets, but later I was glad they had better sense than me. Sure as crap I'd hate Siberian winters."

His parents never stopped speaking Yiddish and Russian to him so that he speaks both fluently—as well as Spanish, French, Italian, Polish, German, Hebrew and any other language he has concourse with for a week. "A gift," he says modestly, "just like Clara, but I have trouble with syntax, she don't."

At seventeen, to give his parents one less mouth to feed, he ran away from home—home was the Bronx in New York City—to become a merchant seaman. He joined the Young Communist League and became active in the union for the Party. During the Thirties, even before the age of twenty, he worked as a Party organizer in the south, and barely escaped being tarred and feathered by Kluxers, as he called them, while trying to organize black sharecroppers.

"Look, I was a Party organizer, tried to get seamen in the Gulf ports to join the union, Negroes—Blacks—to do something for themselves, got on the soapbox at the drop of a hat. I was a red hot, and good, too. Picket lines, demonstrations, hosing scabs—I learned my trade from the bottom up. Revolutionary and labor organizer. I got lumps on my head to prove it! . . ."

In late 1936, he went with the first group of American volunteers sent by the Party to fight against Franco in Spain. His sweating face suddenly marked by a smile, he closed his eyes and softly recited:

Our fight's not won till the workers of all the world
Stand by our guard on Huesca's plain
Swear that our dead fought not in vain.
Raise the red flag triumphantly
For Communism and liberty . . .

John Cornford wrote that, a young Limey who died defending Córdoba. Poor bastard, he believed Communism and liberty meant the same thing at the time Stalin was murdering hundreds of thousands of Communists for believing just that. If he'd have lived, like Auden and Spender, he would've quit. Then he would've been called a fascist. He died, so he's a Communist martyr. . . . Ah, fuck it, why am I telling you all this?"

His slitted eyes staring into space, he was silent, but not for too long.

After training for five weeks in a village in the province of Cuenca, he and the other Americans were sent to the Jarama front south of Madrid, where he survived the disasters which destroyed most of the battalion in its first two battles on February 23 and 27, 1937. The survivors chose him and one other to represent them at Brigade headquarters, where they requested—"Requested, hell, it was a mutiny, we demanded"—further training until the battalion was reconstituted—"There were about one hundred guys left out of five hundred"—and brought up to the standards of the rest of the International Brigades.

During the discussions at Brigade, he met the Russian

adviser, a major, and of course they conversed in Russian. When he returned to the remains of the battalion—demands denied—he was greeted with an order to report to the Russian headquarters at the front.

Once there, the Russian general in charge—"Christ, he looked just like Khrushchev"—told him they did not want "a Russian to be slaughtered with the rest of the lambs."—"I forgot to tell you—my father never got his citizenship papers and I was still a Russian citizen. I couldn't even get a passport, so I snuck on board the *Normandie* when the other guys got on—the French crew helped me, a lot of them were comrades. Well, anyway, the Comrade General ordered me to volunteer for duty as an interpreter for the Russians in Spain. In one second flat I volunteered. They'd bought me off. The other comrade who went with me to Brigade, they bought him off too. He was made battalion commander. From squad leader to commander—just like that."

Later he was sent to Archena, the Russian Tank Base in southeast Spain during the Spanish Civil War, and was trained as a tankist. He alternated between fighting at the front and acting as interpreter for the Russian advisers to the Spanish Republican Army. He was to meet all the Russian generals in Loyal Spain, some of whom were recalled to their death after June 1937 when the purge of the Soviet Army Command was begun by Stalin. "The fact is that every Russian who was in Spain during the war was sent to Siberia when he returned to the socialist homeland. Corrupted by decadent Spain."

He received the Order of the Red Banner for gallantry in action. When the Russians withdrew their forces from Republican Spain in November 1938, he was repatriated

to the United States. "Spain lay dying, in a couple of months it would be dead—

No te conoce nadie. No. Pero yo te canto.
Nobody knows you. No. But I sing of you.
For posterity I sing of your profile and grace.
Of the signal maturity of your understanding.
Of your appetite for death and the taste of its mouth.
Of the sadness of your once valiant gaiety.

In case you don't know, that's Lorca. 1935. A great poet, he had sharp eyes, could see into the future. A year later the fascist bastards killed him, may they rot in hell. Scum, scum, the world's full of scum. Perfect Spanish accent when I ain't—am not—lazy. Well, anyway, I snuck on a French freighter in Marseilles with the help of the crew, walked off with them in Boston. Easy as getting a potato latke on Delancey Street."

He returned to the waterfront, shipped out once, but on return to home port he ran into trouble with the Party.

"It was just a matter of time. The Party murdered the Spanish revolution. Stalin did. And the Russians, they were the worst chauvinists in Spain, treated Spaniards like they was—were—dirt, referred to the Moorish troops we fought against as garbage, and if you wanted to discuss Karl Marx, the *Eighteenth Brumaire,* boy, they thought you were a subversive. In America the Party carried on that Popular Front baloney—it could make an honest socialist puke. I couldn't keep my trap shut. I quit before the Party could throw me out. I got informed on by my so-called comrades four, five times. Everytime

I went to a meeting—I wanted to hear what Norman Thomas had to say—he was a great man, no crap about that—Max Schachtman the unorthodox Trotskyite, Bertram Wolfe, Lewis Corey the best Marxist ever lived in the USA—well, everytime I'd go hear what they had to say, some Party spy at the meeting would see me and report me to the Party leadership in the union. They all knew my face—my picture had been plastered all over the *Daily Worker*—then I'd have to tell off some shitass Party functionary that I, a great hero in the fight for democracy in Spain, had a right to a little democracy in the USA. I knew they were going to expel me, so I beat them to the punch. I wanted to live the rest of my life with the memory that I quit them and not vice versa.

"Then they blacklisted me in the union, the pricks. Couldn't get a ship—stranded on the beach. On the balls of my ass, hungry. So hungry, goddammit, you could see through me. When a Communist talks about blacklisting, I laugh in his face. Socialists, Trotskyites, good old Wobblies couldn't get a job in any union or shop run by the Party. A two thousand dollar a week movie hack gets blacklisted, everybody bleeds. A good honest worker starves, no one lifts a finger, says a word. I met some of those movie jerks at a party or two, introduced to them as this Spanish Civil War vet, Order of the Red Banner, some of the stage people, too, that famous lady dramatist, that courageous woman, and when I was on the beach starving I sent them each a letter asking them to speak up on my behalf to their stinking comrades. You know what I got? Nothing! I'm going to bleed for them, yeah, get me. Only one comrade and war buddy stood up for me, just one."

Now he was silent, catching his breath, sipping orange juice, offering to fill one's glass.

Then he laughed, and resumed.

"I finally wangled a job with the Textile Workers Organizing Committee of the CIO and did organizing work in the East and South. Twenty-one bucks a week pay, twenty-one bucks a week expenses. Expenses took thirty, so I ended up with twelve to live on. No sweat."

After the Nazi-Soviet pact—"They deserved each other. If Hitler hadn't been so greedy, he and Stalin could've shared the world, one East, one West, and we'd all be in concentration camps this minute, that is, if we were still alive"—he quit his union job and went to Canada where he joined an armoured regiment of the Canadian Army. For five years, as a sergeant, he drove a tank in Africa against Rommel and in Europe against anybody in a German uniform. Was decorated for heroism on the battlefield, and recently honored by the Jews of Florence for having, in 1944, defused a live bomb in the ancient synagogue.

Returned to the States, got his citizenship papers, and became an organizer for the International Ladies Garment Workers Union in the South. Fought for the right to join a union, fought for the right to picket, fought for equal pay for men and women, fought for Negro rights, had his head banged some more, banged back. Won a few, lost a few.

Because of his fluency in Spanish, he was sent to Puerto Rico by the union, then several years later to Miami to organize Cuban workers.

Married, three children—two girls and a boy. "Decent, honest kids—troubles, sure, but I'm damned proud

of them. The wife—she says I talk too fucking much—so if you want her story you'll have to get it from her."

Two of his father's brothers, old bolsheviks, died in the Gulag—Kolyma, the worst. The remainder of his father's and mother's families were murdered by the Nazis in Babi Yar. Grandmothers, grandfathers, uncles, aunts, cousins. Some thirty-five. His mother—eighty-seven—he and his three children are the sole remaining members of his side of the family. "Grandkids—holy Moses, I want grandkids."

Was paid a visit by a Joe McCarthy investigator. "Told him to go take a flying fuck for himself. Just in those words. Exactly. McCarthy was a two-bit prick, a liar. The only way to fight Commies is by honest, hard work. Truth buries them. But I got subpoenaed to a trial of my old buddies. Sure I testified. I wanted a place to tell the truth under oath. Gave names. Why not?

> I and the public know
> What all schoolchildren learn,
> Those to whom evil is done
> Do evil in return.

Auden. In case you ain't—haven't—noticed, I got total recall.

"I was graduated from the greatest Informer College the world's ever known—the C.P. You got a B for ratting on a comrade, a B+ on a comrade who was also a friend, an A for ratting on yourself. They informed on me, I informed on them. You give a little, you get a little. You give a lot, you get a lot. Re-ci-pro-ci-ty it's called. They're not immune, they ain't got divine rights. Gave the name of every killer I ever met. Carlos Con-

treras Vitale, anti-fascist fighter from Trieste: killed Anarchists, Socialists, POUMists, comrades. Killed Leon Trotsky. Killed Carlos Tresca right in New York City. One will get you ten he never killed a fascist in his life. Sam D. American volunteer in Spain. Gets co-opted by the GayPayOo. Now he's an anal-ist on Fifth Avenue, gives big cocktail parties where he can boast how he, mmm, ha ha, ho ho, maybe executed a man or two. Very tit-il-la-ting. Again give you odds he never killed a fascist in his life. Remember Mary McCarthy's short story, "Who Killed Andrés Nin?"—the Spanish revolutionary? It could have been him. Vito C. Another American volunteer to fight in Spain. He never killed a fascist either. But with comrades he was a marksman: French comrades, German comrades, Norwegian comrades, Polish comrades, American comrades. A real internationalist. Ran the I.B. dungeons in Castelldefels. That guy, Max Gruber, the Brute, one of the hijackers, blood brother to Vito C. Killers. I didn't forget the names of those bastards who shivved me either. As I say, you give a little, you get it back. I was brought up as a Communist, not a Christian—never learned to turn the other cheek. One thing is certain, nobody I named lost his job—they were either Europeans, dead, or Party hacks. Maybe the Party canned them—if so, I say you're welcome. Some guys who testified feel guilty, maybe those guys who testified for McCarthy or that stupid Congressional Committee or who kissed you one day and ratted on you the next. Not me. If I was an ex-Nazi and gave names, I'd be a hero.

"They're left fascists, why pussyfoot about it, that's what they are. I knew guys, and women, too, who got a

hard on everytime Stalin killed another million. Some people, you look at them, they're nice, decent, want the best for the world, but they have this hatred deep inside them, so they join up with someone else who'll do the killing for them. Joe Stalin. Adolf Hitler. Let those left fascists talk up and say who they are. A fascist right or left is poison. Label them so the world knows. I fight fascists in black shirts, brown shirts, red shirts, white shirts, dirty shirts. Go ask the Anarchists of Spain, they'll tell you what a Commie is: a liar or a killer or both. If you wear blinders, that's your problem, not mine, you'll get what you deserve."

He was interrupted by a muttered comment, something about perhaps protesting too much.

With a scrambling swiftness, he was off the bed standing in his stocking feet, floppy maroon cotton slacks, bazaar-colored sports shirt, with bald head glistening, and blue eyes suddenly deadly black bayonet points peering from the slits above his high cheekbones. His heavy chest and shoulders overwhelmed the corpulence of a beer belly, and the sheer power and rage of the man who'd fought in two wars, challenged Kluxers, cops, and strikebreakers were now nakedly present.

"All right," he said coldly, "yuh shove me against the wall. Yeah, if you wanna know, revenge is sweet—the sweetness of rotting corpses on a battlefield. In their world you either eat shit or refuse to eat it, even your own. I'm one of those dumb bastards who won't eat it. Yeah, after I left the courtroom I puked my guts out, everything, all the shit. Back there when I quit the Party, did I tell you about my best buddy, my comrade, what he said to me? We're enemies now. If I'm ordered to dump you, I'll dump you. To kill you, I'll kill you. My

buddy, my comrade. Shiteater—that's what he was. All of them, shiteaters. Y'know what a shiteater is? I'll tell you. In '32, just before Hitler took power, there was a high muckamuck Party meeting in Berlin. Leading comrades came from all Europe. What to do? Go into the streets and fight to the last man, that's what most wanted to do. Stalin sent a messenger. Retire, let Hitler come to power without a fight—he'll be the icebreaker for the Revolution. Some refused to go along with the great Stalin. Went on their knees, begged, cried. If we don't fight him, he'll slaughter our people by the thousands; tens of thousands will be imprisoned. Of course, Stalin won. Hitler would be allowed to take power without a fight. After this meeting, a famous Hungarian considered by many to be the most brilliant intellectual in the Western world, György Lukács, Marxist theoretician, great literary critic, announced he would go along even though he disagreed. One of the dissenting German comrades—now suddenly an ex—asked him how he could do that, and Lukács answered: 'If Stalin, the Party, orders me to eat shit, I'll eat shit.' That's what a shiteater is. Not me. Not even my own. I puked it all out. Okay, you satisfied now? You happy?"

He turned and padded to a valise leaning against a wall, opened it, yanked out a bottle of vodka, uncorked it, took a long pull, offered it, shrugged his shoulders at the rejection, recorked it, replaced it, turned back to the bed, climbed on, reclined against the pillows, crossed his ankles, shuddered himself into comfort, smiled angelically. "Holy cow, you could squeeze a turd out of a man who ain't eaten for a week." Laughed loud and clear, all the anger gone, abruptly vanished.

Resumed.

"My wife and me went to Israel to join a kibbutz. There's more socialism in the kibbutzim than in Russia, China, and all of Eastern Europe combined. They wouldn't take us, said we're too old, afraid we couldn't pull our weight. Hardly blame them, we've only got a few years left of hard work. My wife went back to the States and I hung around wanting to talk to some of the old-timers who'd fought in Spain. Some are still loyal to the Party. Can you imagine that? Poisoned, corrupt human beings, too damned yellow to admit they'd been wrong all their lives. Not Clara, she's learning. Old Avram, he's eating himself alive. The bastard, I wonder how many people he killed, put in the can. For the Cause—for the Revolution! Clara takes care of him, why, I don't know. They're old comrades, I guess. She was taking him to Paris for a little vacation, and I thought I'd go along with them and then head for home from there.

"She's a pistol. Eating herself alive, too. She gave the Party time—gave them her whole life, spying, torture, danger, the works. She'll tell you about it herself.

"Those terrorists, you should've seen them, especially that Viktor X and Gabriele. When they came into First Class—yeah, we were living it up for a change—I couldn't keep my eyes off them. They were dressed like tourists, all dolled up, but their faces were bruised, lips puffed up, rings under their eyes, looked like they had a fight. But good looking—she was a beaut. When she moved I couldn't stop staring—what a body, one of those long, streamlined dolls with golden hair, a face to match, bruised and all. Sullen looking like a wild tiger caught in a cage, rattling the bars. They were

both caught by something too big for them. Too big for anybody. If Bukharin could speak, he would tell you. The guy was built like an athlete, narrow waist, broad shoulders, a great head, handsome. Above it all. Pure. Germans, I said to myself, both of them. The fellow walked like he was girdled, and I kept thinking he had something wrong with his back and was wearing a brace. It was just that he was stiff, almost as if he was afraid to let himself loose. What he needed most was a bayonet up his ass to loosen all that crap.

"When they went into their act, though, they were scared, trembling, and I thought, Christ, they're so nervous the trigger'll go off without them even meaning to shoot. Old Avram, he whispered to me, now's the time to take them, before they settle down, but remember he's in his seventies, I'm in my sixties, and we don't move so good and so fast. A bad move and there would have been lots of blood. Besides, we heard someone scream in Economy. There would have been a shoot out with two hundred people sitting up there in the sky. We had to sit and take it.

"When Viktor announced he was an Arab, I almost bust out laughing. But don't let me crap you, I was scared, too. If Clara and Avram were scared, they didn't show it. Clara kept saying, whispering, we're going to have a hard time. I hate apparatchiks, but I'm sure as hell glad we had Avram along. Suddenly his eyes changed and you could see his head was always working. When we landed the first time and the Arabs tied tin cans to the doors and Viktor told us they were explosives, Avram said, they're lying, but who could take chances? Your own life, okay, but two hundred people? And Clara be-

gan to wrap that Viktor around her little finger. As the Black kids in that union class I give say, cool, man, cool.

"Clara'll tell and tell you better what happened. We were sure, especially Avram, that in another couple of days the shooting of the hostages would begin. Avram kept saying, we have to buy time, we have to buy time. He could read those bastards like an open book. He knows, the prick, was taught in the best school in the world, GPU, NKVD, KGB. He and Clara bought us time, but the terrorists were becoming impatient, especially the Brute. Kept slapping people around. Was just dying to kill somebody. Fräulein Gabriele was becoming nastier and nastier, lashing out at one hostage or another for no reason, sometimes even at Viktor. All of a sudden she got blotches on her face, and she kept scratching. They were getting nervous and impatient. They wanted to get it over with. Only Viktor kept his cool. And Clara kept him that way.

"When Big Fat with all his medals, Killer First Class, spoke to us, Clara charmed the balls off him. Bought time. Avram and me were afraid Big Fat would kidnap her for himself. Wait'll you see her. Unbelievable. If I wasn't happily married, I'd never leave, just sleep at her doorstep. But don't let her fool you, she may be learning fast, but she's hating herself for something deep inside, eating herself alive.

"A woman with her guts. You know—if you don't I'll tell you—she lived two years in Hamburg during the war, a spy for Russia and the Allies—a Jew and a Communist to boot. And the firebombings. Two years. Can you imagine that?

"I don't know what's eating her, you'll have to ask

her. A Commie so long—she must live with plenty of ghosts. . . . Ah, hell, the world could've been a great place, but if it ain't—isn't—it's not my fault, I tried my best.

"Those two, the German Romeo and Juliet, and the Brute—if ever there was somebody I'd have loved to put through a meat grinder, he was it. Could you imagine living in a new world created by guys like him? Ah, the hell with it. Chalk up a good inning for us. God knows what the next will bring.

"Hey, I gotta pack my bags and catch a plane. I start getting my Social Security next year. It's mine. I earned it, little as it is. Fought for it. And a lot of other people getting it ought to kiss my ass for it. Me and all the porkchoppers who had our heads banged in fighting for it.

"Two years in Spain, five years in World War II, a million bullets and bombs whizzing by, ten, twelve years in the American South before it became even half-civilized, then another twelve years, and now this hijacking, and I'm still alive scars and all. How the hell do you figure that for luck? God's with me. I never forgot I was a Jew. Don't let me con you—I got ghosts, too. I'm no angel. Far from it. Like those two—Viktor, Gabriele—the changes don't come fast enough. Action . . . action. You believe. You get sucked in. First you fight a cop. He busts your head in. The next time he's an enemy—you want to kill him. Everybody don't agree with you is an enemy. The world stinks. Everybody else but you is stupid. If comrades weaken—they're soft. You're a hard. You curse. Goddamned weaklings, all of them, soft—comrades, workers who won't join the union,

the Cause, you have to do more, faster, harder, tougher. You lie once for the Cause; soon you're lying all the time. Most to yourself. You beat a scab's head in. Next time you don't wait for reasons; you don't listen; you barge in, fists swinging at anyone who happens to be in the way. Before you know it, you're a goon—a killer—a terrorist. I faced all that, I know.

"Enough, goddammit, I got to move. Say good-bye to Clara for me again. If she lets you, give her a kiss. *Do svidania. Shalom.* See you, kid."

THE YOUNG ONES

Viktor and Gabriele

• AT A MEETING YESTERDAY, FOR THE FIRST TIME I MET Otto "I Suck" Kampfmann face to face. He wears a dirty T-shirt emblazoned in red, I SUCK!, therefore his sobriquet. He's obese, tall, awkward, with little pig eyes, and he wears his hair tied back in a pigtail. A clown. But what a clown! How I envy him.

"I heard great things about you from Vanessa," he said, shaking hands. "You got a big one she said, wow, what a man." He grinned, did a little tap dance, and opened the meeting before I could respond.

He interrupted a long discussion with a shout. "Enough of this pigshit! What's really important is my ability or inability to get a hard on. French movies have taught us that revolution can be fun, and such wonderful fun that we can use it for our cause. When the people see how much fun it is to throw stink bombs at the institutions of power, they'll join us by the millions. . . ."

Everyone applauded and laughed, Gabriele loudest of all. He opened his fly and showed her his lumpish cock. The laughter was a galactic explosion. Gabriele threw off the large sweater she'd been wearing and revealed her golden tits. Otto leaped from the platform and together they rocked and rolled. Soon all joined the festivities.

Not I. Otto is more serious than he knows. He is free of all inhibitions, is a creator of chaos. Chaos! What a marvelous word. A violence which destroys all reason, makes for panic which then becomes an instrument for the destruction of the organized mass: the State.

Later in Otto's Rolls (he's the heir to a great industrial fortune), Gabriele and I drove with him to his villa in Elbchaussee-Hamburg. I sat behind the wheel—I wanted the pleasure of driving this palatial machine—as Gabriele and Kampfmann sat at my side.

All during the journey they fondled each other, laughing and squealing. I envied them their ability to laugh with such glee, but I wasn't jealous. Gabriele, the fool, was trying to make me jealous, but I was thinking of Vanessa, Kampfmann's friend, who was awaiting our arrival in Elbchaussee.

Vanessa Dietrich and Gabriele both gained celebrity in the Revolution simultaneously—side by side, it could be said, though unknown to each other personally. Each graced the centerfold of last month's *STEEL,* the Hamburg radical journal published by Franz Links. *The road to the heart of the proletariat is carpetted with pubic hair* appears in red under the masthead.

Gabriele adorned the left side of the centerfold, Vanessa the right. Gabriele, more modest, lay on a bed draped with the red flag of the Revolution with her knees only slightly open so that her cunt was in secret shadow, the fingers of her left hand pinching a pink nipple. Vanessa, less modest, lay on a settee draped with the black flag of Anarchism, her legs spread wide, three fingers of her right hand deep in her vagina.

Vanessa is a voluptuous brunette, her large globular tits tipped by nipples the color and size of walnuts.

The proletariat, eclectic in its tastes, loved both. Circulation soared.

I love neither, but if asked would say I prefer Vanessa. (To suck thirstily at her breasts, to lose myself in her ample flesh, to smell her salty sweat, to slide back into the unknown, to discover the secret of my birth, to be swallowed by the flames of passion, to burn, to feel the pain.)

Vanessa, sorry to say, prefers I Suck Kampfmann because he suffers from an orgasmic dysfunction—his cock erects like a soft banana—but, Vanessa proclaims, his tongue's a miracle of length and rectitude, and sucking is better than fucking. Still she doesn't reject me because I can spend endless hours fondling her grandiose charms, which next to sucking, Vanessa avers, is the greatest. Wow!

Gabriele prefers the quick draw, the fast shot. She's a revolutionary who, like Ahab the leader of the Red Army Fraction, becomes exhilarated with violence. A bomb, a gun, she boasts (so far neither of us has used a gun in anger, except at a bull's-eye), gives you a feeling of superiority. With a gun, a dwarf can kill a giant. Her father, she says, left her without power; the gun will return it to her.

I don't like guns. A pistol, one of our more violent comrades has written, hampers the upright stance. Your head is never quite erect; it bends in the direction of the weapon; you walk so as to be able to use every movement to be quick on the draw. It is said that Ahab, whom I haven't as yet met, becomes apelike once his Belgian 7.65 rests behind his belt—his head and body lean forward, his long arms dangle freely at his sides, his jaw unhinges and juts loosely forward.

If and when I become more violent, I think I'll choose the Molotov cocktail as my weapon. I can see myself grasping its slender neck in my fist, rearing back, flinging it. The bottle shatters, there's an explosion, a rushing roar of fire. Fire fascinates me. Its sizzle leaps at me; its flames envelop

me, and I'm propelled back in time to some fetid sweetness, perhaps the smell and heat of my unknown mother's womb. The truth, the truth: is that why I love to ream Vanessa's ass with my tongue?

When I tell Gabriele that fire fascinates me, she laughs at me. "I'll burn you at the stake like some saintly martyr."

"Why not?" I say, then grin, enjoying the image.

Vanessa can't abide guns or violence. She told me that when I Suck fondled his Beretta semiautomatic in front of her for the first time, she became nauseated; her knees gave way, she almost fainted. But she loves to sleep with violent revolutionaries because they can do in reality what she can only do in fantasy: kill the enemies of the Revolution. "Not that I don't believe in killing," she says, "how else can the Revolution be won?"

In bed, she fucks violently; we wound one another.

Gabriele, as I, has by now read all the revolutionaries from Proudhon to Ché, and can quote chapter and verse. For that I admire her. Her laughter and pretense that it's all a sport don't fool me. Soon she'll kill. Will I?

Vanessa has never read a word. (Neither has Otto. He is intuitively a revolutionary. He is *against*. "To destroy, first we must be against," he says.) Vanessa thinks Bakunin's the name of a sea resort on the Black Sea, Nechaiev a ballet dancer who's defected from the Bolshoi to the West, thus a traitor.

Gabriele despises her. I enjoy fucking her. I Suck loves her.

Her parents are wealthy tradespeople, and she, like the rest of us (so far I'm the only one with a working-class background that I know of in the Movement), has never known hunger. She came to the Revolution because she wanted to be free—hence her first truly revolutionary act was to appear in the centerfold of *STEEL* completely naked, her luxuriant brown bush ornamented with ribbon bows, three fingers stuck deep in her cunt. (As for Gabriele: "It was my

way of sticking it up my father's ass. Mutti doesn't count.") Should some academician write an essay on sex and revolution, Vanessa Dietrich, Gabriele, and I Suck would figure spectacularly in its pages.

In Kampfmann's villa—as elegant and tidy as he is inelegant and untidy—we ate steaks, drank liters of beer, danced wildly, and when it came time to prepare for bed, I grabbed Vanessa first, though I knew she would have preferred I Suck, who though preferring her as well went to bed with Gabriele who wanted me. I had finessed them, so to speak. They couldn't say a word, for that would've been *de trop*. (The conformity of the nonconformists, I laughed to myself.)

Sometime during the night I was wakened by someone getting into bed behind me. I felt a penis sliding down my back. I sat up with a start, grabbed I Suck's pigtail and almost yanked his head off. He screamed and howled like a baby. Vanessa sat up and began flailing away at my back. Gabriele came on the run and piled on, throwing her fists wildly, but mostly, I noticed, at Vanessa. Otto ended up crying, a big fat two hundred twenty-five pound baby; Vanessa had a split lip, and Gabriele and I laughed uproariously.

After we'd all settled down in the big bed, we talked, and Otto, now grinning like a clown, finally said, "We need some action. Quick, too. Otherwise we'll end up killing each other. Revolutionaries need action all the time, that's why they're revolutionaries."

We agreed.

In the morning, we scanned the news. The headline on the first page announced the death of the Honorable Paul Löbe, the last Social Democratic leader of the Reichstag before Hitler assumed power. There will be a massive funeral; dignitaries of the world will be present. His body, buried under huge flower wreaths, will lie in state in the rotunda of the West Berlin City Hall.

All for an incompetent reformer who, along with the old-

left and center-left, couldn't cope with the Nazi onslaught. They should have murdered Hitler and that would've been the end of it, put a million of his followers against the wall. The puny efforts of bourgeois democracy. . . .

On the second page there was a report that the State Bank in Freiburg was bombed the previous night and robbed of a half million. After midnight. Clean. No clues. A Molli Wenders job, Otto said. We applauded Genosse Wenders. Kampfmann said Wenders kept the Movement in arms and money—also himself.

Since I do not know Wenders, I asked Otto who he was. I Suck, as is his way, made a long story of it. I give the bare bones.

Steven Wenders—an alias. Late twenties.

An American Quaker. Father is president of a large bank in Minnesota. German immigrant ancestry.

Went to a Quaker college in Pennsylvania. Opposed the Vietnam war and joined campus radicals. Later helped organize the Weathermen. A first rate engineer, he became a bomb expert. Not to kill—he is a Quaker—but to bomb symbols of capitalist power: banks, universities, government buildings. Sought by the FBI, he lived underground in the Rockies. Surfaced in West Berlin. Speaks German perfectly. Called Molli because he's an expert with Molotov cocktails. Is very intelligent, devoted to the Revolution, but will not kill. Ahab and Theresa, leaders of the Red Army Fraction, have great respect for him. Moves about West Germany at will with forged papers. When asked why he chose West Germany, he responded: the United States, Germany—East or West—Russia, you name it, power is international, and I oppose power. It is as simple as that.

When Otto concluded with Wenders' biography, Vanessa said, "His father must be a real Prussian."

Gabriele looked at her with scorn. "You're still a little bourgeois rabbit, worrying about personal motivation and all that shit. Who cares? To destroy, to rip them up, no motivations needed, that's all that matters. Right, Viktor?"

"Right," I said, and we drank to it, then returned to the first page of the newspaper and Herr Löbe's funeral. I Suck entertained us with an imitation of Herr Löbe making a speech to the Reichstag: Ahem, Honorable Members, the barbarians are at the gates, however and whereas we are a democratic state we must, ahem, welcome them with open arms, ahem, prove our loyalty to the democratic ideals for which we have so valiantly fought, ahem. . . . As Otto speaks, he jigs, dances, hops about, his fat tits bouncing under the I SUCK! on his dirty T-shirt. His own laughter is so contagious we can't help joining in with him.

As we sit on the terrace overlooking Elbchaussee, the sky fog-gray, Kampfmann throws out a suggestion for a revolutionary act. Gabriele and I like it. We'll shatter their respectability, their hypocrisy. The masses will laugh so uproariously that the State will tremble. With fear? With anger? What matter. They'll arrest us. For what? Indecent exposure? They no more know how to cope with us than they did with Hitler.

We are comrades, happy. We plan a militant act. •

IN THE CENTER OF THE ROTUNDA THE COFFIN OF RICH mahogany rests half open on a catafalque. From its open end can be seen the stony, dignified visage of the Honorable Herr Paul Löbe. At foot and head stand four guards in the uniform of the Republic. The inner rim of the rotunda is heaped with flowers. At the rear the flags of City and State hang limply at half-mast. Around the rear of the coffin, in a semicircle, stand the dignitaries of the City, the State, plenipotentiaries, ambassadors, emissaries, consulate officers. They whisper in hushed tones,

speak to one another of the deceased's greatness, of his steadfastness in the evil face of the barbarians.

From the Strasse a dirge is heard. It approaches. Up the marble steps a cortege can be seen approaching, first two files of ten each, men and women dressed in black. They chant a *Miserere*. Behind them, twenty men and women, all dressed in black, ten on each side, carry a black-draped platform heaped with flowers, behind them, two more files of ten, men and women, all dressed in black.

The cortege approaches the catafalque on which rests the Honorable Herr Paul Löbe.

The dignitaries, the plentipotentiaries, the emissaries, ambassadors, and countless others stand in awed silence.

The cortege stops before the Honored Deceased. A beautiful young woman, her hair gold, her eyes agate blue, steps before the catafalque. She addresses the mourning assemblage.

"We have come to honor the passing of a great man, a true democrat—a man who in time of dire national crisis begged for reform when he should have commanded guns. To kill!"

From the heap of flowers on the black draped platform leaps I Suck Kampfmann, dressed in a long lacy nightgown emblazoned with the words I FUCK, and from beneath him appears the gorgeously nude Vanessa Dietrich, across her ample breasts emblazoned YOU!

Consternation. Uproar. They could have made a clean getaway, but that was not their intention. They waited for the police. All were arrested. They complied peace-

fully. They were booked for disturbing the peace. They paid their fines.

They'd made their point.

• The laughter is heard around the world. The German Federal Republic stands in shame. Their bourgeois democracy is a farce.

We made all the papers. Pictures, too.

Kurt and Ilka demanded that I come home for a talk. I refused.

Martin Strelsin flew in. Gabriele laughed in his face. He slapped her. She drew a knife from her baggy pants. He called her a whore, then left.

I feel badly for Ilka and Kurt. They gave me bread. It's not my fault that they misread me, accepted my exemplary behavior as proof of their own goodness, their human face. They try hard. But that's no excuse for blindness when they have eyes with which to see. There are no innocent, only the blind. Blind from fear—the fear that if they saw with open eyes, they'd see the irrational beast for what it is. Themselves. •

VIKTOR, GABRIELE, OTTO, AND VANESSA WERE CONgratulated on the success of their political comedy by comrades from all of Europe. Overnight, they became international stars.

The honors really belonged to Gabriele, the others modestly said. I Suck had made the suggestion, but Gabriele took it from there, created it, plotted it, rehearsed it, timed it to the second. She was a master organizer.

"I am my father's daughter," she said with a laugh.

True, Martin Strelsin, poor boy at birth, had organized one of the most powerful multinational enterprises in the world. Now his daughter organized for the Revolution.

Blood will tell, they say. It is in the genes.

No, others say, it is in the environment.

Nonsense, Viktor says, it's the offspring competing with the parent.

"I will be Rosa Luxemburg," Gabriele said in her new elegant underground pad in Lerchesberg-Frankfurt.

"Not Rosa," Viktor said with a smile, "she was too democratic. Trotsky, he was the great organizer."

"I will be Trotsky, then," she said.

"Trotsky was a Jew," Vanessa said.

They looked at her.

I Suck began to giggle, his fat pectorals jiggling, first "I", then "SUCK", up, down. "Vanessa's not an anti-Semite. She merely dislikes Jews," he said, giggling again, jiggling, up, down.

Viktor changed the subject before it became unpleasant.

"If Gabriele competes with her father," he said, "with whom do I compete? Kurt? Ilka? Or is it X squared? Who were they, my X mother, my X father?"

Vanessa laughed. Gabriele took his hand in hers. Otto leaped to his feet. "Stop the shit talk! Franz Links has a new toy, let's run up to Hamburg for a look."

"You're right again," Viktor said with a smile. "It's a crock of shit."

Franz Links, the publisher, was Theresa's husband during her Christian pacifist stage, before she hooked up

with Ahab to form the Red Army Fraction. Links' idea of publishing *STEEL* in the *Playboy* format proved successful. When, under pressure from more inhibited comrades, he showed less skin and more Marx, circulation plummetted. Back to more skin and less Marx, it rose spectacularly. *The road to the heart of the proletariat is carpetted with pubic hair,* at first derided as infantile by the new left intellectuals, was now accepted as one of the iron laws of the Revolution. It was rumored even the great Sartre had smiled and given it his blessing.

Links had bought a Landmann-Preetz, a small handgun, and it was that they were driving to Hamburg to see.

They piled into the Rolls, Otto and Vanessa in the roomy back, Gabriele at Viktor's side as he drove. He was becoming attached to the car. As Vanessa and her lover drank beer, talked and giggled in the back, Gabriele ran her finger up and down Viktor's thigh, alternating the rhythm, surprising him, teasing him.

Once he said, "You're beginning to learn."

She said nothing, merely continued to caress him.

"Harder," he said.

She complied.

The tachometer needle flew upwards; the speedometer needle hit 125 kph, and he kept saying, "Harder, damn you, harder."

Finally, she leaned over, unzipped his fly, and, her head on his lap, sucked, then bit until even Viktor screamed, and the Rolls hit 150 per hour.

"You're learning, darling," he again said, the wounded bird now returned to its nest.

Gabriele merely smiled.

Soon they were in Hamburg in the office of Franz Links, along with several *STEEL* editors, a gaggle of visiting student revolutionaries, and a flock of hangers-on.

Links withdrew the gun from its cache. He handled it delicately, disassembled it, reassembled it, passed it among them for their inspection. It was the first time many of them had held so lethal a weapon.

Everyone marvelled at it, held it as if it were sacred; the first arrowhead forged by a primitive inventor-warrior.

"It really shoots?"

"Real bullets?"

"It can waste somebody?"

"Take someone for a ride?"

Everyone in the movement, it seemed, was an American movie fan. It was said Ahab had seen *High Noon* ten times, and practiced his draw interminably. Because he was lanky and wore a cowlick over his right eye, he thought he resembled Gary Cooper. But his nose was flat and his lips puffy so he looked like a pug. His eyes were small and very dark and looked as hard as steel-jacketed bullets. Ahab had already killed.

As they passed the Landmann-Preetz among them, Vanessa became ill. She paled, retched, and ran to the toilet to spill out her dinner.

Otto, unabashedly, said, "She'll sure as shit take it out on me tonight."

They left her and went to the Hamburg gardens where they took target practice, firing wildly at tin cans and lamp post bulbs, till several neighbors appeared and threatened to call the police. Gabriele grabbed the gun and aimed it at them, but Viktor snatched it out of her hand.

"Stop, you fool, not now. There will come a time soon when they'll think twice before calling the police."

• GABRIELE AND I HAVE THROWN ROCKS, MARCHED, DEMonstrated, organized a student riot during which we threw stink bombs, destroyed laboratory experiments, threatened professors (a cowardly lot), but we haven't beaten anyone up, nor have we killed.

It's inevitable that it will come to that. It is what Molli Wenders, our armorer and bank robber, has called the spiraling effect. He has himself avoided the final act: the taking of human life. He constructs his Molotovs, his Mollies; he buys the Fraction guns, supplies stolen money, but he has not killed. Not yet.

Gabriele and I have met Molli, a name he doesn't like but which he accepts with a shrug of his slight shoulders, and both of us like him very much. Despite the harsh scars of adolescent acne, his face is, as the Spaniards say it, *muy simpático*. He is soft-spoken, intelligent, has a bizarre sense of humor, is totally committed to the cause of international terrorism, and is homesick for the States. "That's why I've increased my Molotov production—keeps my mind off pie à la mode." He has promised to take us on one of his bank jobs. "But no killing!"

Franz Links, short, plump, bouncy as a rubber ball, has never used his gun. *STEEL* and a centerfold of lewd female nudes were as far as he would go. Acerbic Gabriele said, "One glance at Theresa tells you why." Theresa, a parson's daughter, has a soft shapeless body atop which her long gaunt face and razor thin lips look out of place, as if a mistake were made by those who formed her. But her brown eyes are very large and beautiful and fully reveal her great intelligence. She wears her dark brown hair very short and is always got up in frumpish ruffled dresses. She married

Franz during her "Down with the nukes, up with the Cross" phase. They were bourgeois to the wedding bands on their fingers. It was before Theresa had come, through her study of Nechaiev, Lenin, and Stalin, to believe in the *necessary murder.* (Steve Wenders' spiraling effect.) Soon thereafter she joined up with Ahab, rawboned, canny brute.

I have no faith, and that gives me freedom, yet I am rudderless—I hem and haw. I feel little, want to feel more, and love not at all. Ahab and St. Theresa have an ideology, a faith, or so they say. Ahab is pure brute—his Cro-Magnon face no mistake. (Secretly, I admire him.) It is Theresa who has given him a brain. He's been trained by the KGB, merely a new name for OGPU, an organization so exemplary that it was imitated by the Gestapo, and now by the Amerikan CIA. The Gestapo proved successful because the State which governed was as brutal as its police instrumentality. The CIA is less successful, even ludicrous, because the State which governs is immersed in the liberal swamp: it rules with doubt, thus its police function accordingly. Either the State must transform itself into total brute or its instrumentality must function with liberality.

Franz Links, a fake revolutionary, like Vanessa, was really afraid of his gun and has hidden it. He was afraid to cross the line. Theresa has divorced him, and he's been awarded their two children. Last week Gabriele and Theresa kidnapped them. Theresa loves her children, and has taught them well. They were brought back from school one afternoon bloodied, their clothes torn, faces dirtied. It seems they had initiated their schoolmates into a new game to replace the old one of cops and robbers. This one is called: Terror. They used real rocks.

Links has now said our violence is countereffective, that it will reactivate Nazism in the Federal Republic. Naturally—that's our purpose: to reveal the true face of our society. We have decided it should not be said, at least not by one of our comrades. Ahab and I (yes, I've joined up with the most respected terrorist in the West) have informed Links that

the traditional rule still holds: either one is with us or against us. There can be no backing out. We're at war! Life or death!

Gabriele and I have taken another step forward. Together with Molli Wenders we bombed the State Bank of Hanover. We did it after midnight, first ascertaining that no one was there. Gabriele then called the police—disguising her voice—to inform them it was the work of the Red Army Fraction, since Ahab and Theresa planned it. They are ideological, and for that reason I don't trust them. They would destroy one restrictive society in order to construct a new one. Gabriele and I oppose all society. But Ahab and Theresa are very brave and want to raise the struggle to a higher stage. They have already firebombed a Berlin department store at midday, killing three people. Molli Wenders opposes the killing of innocent people. Gabriele says no one is innocent so long as he or she is a servant of this society.

Gabriele and I are close comrades, agree on most things, but she fucks whom she pleases as do I. In bed, she's tried, but can't break loose. It's over almost before it starts. It is so infuriating I want to beat her. She knows and says, "Go ahead," but I leave her and go sleep on the sofa.

Comrades Ahab assigned to help us, Georg v. R., Max Gruber, and Dieter Paulus, the youngest among us—a thin pimply boy without nerves, it seems—have just left. Gabriele is in the bath. My heart as I write this is beating furiously.

At last, at last, Gabriele and I have crossed the line!

Links wrote another article denouncing us as Nazis because some forty of us made a second raid on the University, again throwing stink bombs into classrooms, breaking windows, dropping paper sacks of human shit on the desks of professors who condemn our actions as irrational.

When the fat little Links arrived at his doorstep tonight, the five of us jumped him, gagged him, bound him and then drove with him to Dieter's garage. There we attacked him. After we deposited him back at his home, we drove here and

Georg wrote the report for Theresa and Ahab which we all initialed. I incorporate it as follows:

> How silly he was, ridiculous, crying for help. The traitor thought we were going to murder him, and with all the screaming, he might have been right. However, we had planned it badly.
>
> We should have arranged beforehand what role each of us had to play. Viktor was the only one who knew exactly what he had to do—namely, go for the throat. He applied pressure to Links' windpipe, and when he began turning purple, Viktor released him. We should have made an exact division of the legs, the arms, everything. Max let Links have it with a solid piece of glass, and then took another grip of the bottle and hit him again and again.
>
> Gabriele said, no, no, and stopped Max. She was correct inasmuch as cutting Links was not in our original plan, but what Max was up to was right in the particular situation.
>
> In our opinion, the action was a failure because we treated Links as a person, talked to him instead of completely tying him up, beating him, and when he came to, giving him another going over.
>
> Right at this moment we would like to return to Links and finish him off, but that would require a decision of the Fraction. Karate or Kalashnikov automatic. (We shall need training.)
>
> Conclusion: We must be clear about this: that in such actions our humanism will be transformed.
>
> Lesson: In such situations we must simply liquidate human feeling.
>
> G.v.R. M.G. G.R. V.X. D.P.

After her shower, Gabriele was unusually quiet. She placed a *Rolling Stones* record on the player (Gabriele says that if she ever went back to her father, she would buy Mick Jagger and put him on a leash), and naked we both danced, wildly, yet strangely without uttering a sound. For the first time I began to feel profound sexual pleasure with her. Abruptly, she stopped, ran to her baggy pants and from it withdrew the leather belt. She handed it to me and asked me to whip her. I refused.

"You'll desire me even more," she said.

"Not that way," I said.

"You don't understand, you simply don't understand," she said.

"No," I said, "it's you who don't understand."

We went to bed, and again it was over before I felt anything. A quick spasm for her, a quick spasm for me. I wanted to whip her then, damn it, but she was soon asleep. She fucks fast; she sleeps fast; I could kill her.

I lay back and stared into the darkness. Inside my head I could hear the whistle of bombs falling, the crackling of fire, the screams of shrapnel, felt an intense heat, and clasped Gabriele's inert body to myself, held her so tightly I could hear her bones groan. Gabriele cried out, sobbed, called for her father. Her cry was so sharp it felt like a baling hook jammed into my heart. I felt compassion for her, spoke tender words to her, embraced her lovingly. She calmed down and slept in peace. I could not.

I rose and went to my account book, before which I now sit, wondering how far we'll go now that we've crossed the line. While I was choking Franz and the others were beating him, and he was crying and screaming and turning purple, I wanted to cry—doubt again, doubt. It'll be the death of me. •

• THE FILTH! THE VERMIN! BOURGEOIS CRETINS! THEY ought to be shot!

I write of three of our Munich comrades—comrades! —who robbed the State Bank of Düsseldorf, then boasted to the world that they, *they,* had committed the act, thus breaking one of the basic tenets of terrorism: that it's the Group which commits the act of terror, not its individuals.

The police had an easy time of it. They were tried and convicted. Judge Helder of the Superior Court of Düsseldorf sentenced them to fifteen years. He should have had them shot and saved us the trouble.

Ahab was as angry as I. Gabriele laughed at us, saying that we were reacting like typical male warriors, "The tribe is everything. Balls!"

Theresa told us all to shut up, we were acting like children. "We have to spring them."

We met in Vanessa Dietrich's Düsseldorf apartment, which is accoutered with the most expensive Italian modern furniture. In her garage is a silver Ferrari sports car. She wore a silk Japanese kimona, a gift from a Japanese comrade who has come to join us. Fukado. He's an extremely handsome man, face almond-shaped, eyes as black as his hair, teeth so white and evenly shaped that when he smiles it is truly like the rising sun. He speaks German perfectly, his voice soft and melodious. He's muscular and though shorter than I must be every bit as strong. Gabriele and Vanessa have fallen for him. Vanessa walked about in her kimona, first one tit falling out, then the other, her full thighs revealed flashingly, then her curly brown bush. She distracted us so much that Theresa commanded her to go get dressed, we had serious business to attend to.

Fukado and I are much alike—outwardly seemingly controlled, inwardly explosive, violent. He, like me, can see the shrapnel flying, the bombs falling, the flames crackling. He's from Nagasaki, and during our discussion spoke softly when he suggested we fire bomb the home of Judge Helder.

Ahab, Kampfmann, and Dietrich, who act first and think afterward, agreed with him.

Gabriele, who never agrees with Vanessa, suggested it would be more advisable, and intelligent—she looked pointedly at Vanessa—to kidnap the judge and hold him for ransom: our three comrades, with passports, and a flight to Libya. "After all, they did give us the million and a half they stole before being caught." She suggested Libya because el-Qaddafi has been in communication with us, congratulated us on our militancy, and offered us money and help should we require it.

Kampfmann insisted it would be more fun to firebomb the judge's home when he and his family are at dinner, and fuck the comrades—they ought to pay for their own mistake.

Theresa impatiently remarked that his reasons were childish. Ahab reminded her that she was becoming too damned dogmatic. She waved him aside with an impatient hand.

I, by now having caught hold of and squeezed my temper into place, convinced them that kidnapping and ransom, though more difficult, would have a more salutary effect—it would prove our strength and the inherent weakness of the State. Also, it would earn us more media space throughout the world.

Fukado, smiling his sunny smile, said softly that I was absolutely correct, it was sound revolutionary thinking. I returned his smile, though I could see that under the table around which we sat he was caressing Gabriele's thigh. (It made me jealous. The first time. I wondered why—was it because he was so damned handsome?)

We planned the kidnapping.

Fukado, unknown as yet in our country, was to investigate the daily habits of the judge.

We will use stolen cars. Molli Wenders, an excellent and patient instructor, has taught me how to pull a lock and crosswire the starter. The judge will be held in Vanessa's flat right here in Düsseldorf because it has an escape hatch fully

prepared. (We do other things besides fuck and drive around in fancy cars between acts of militancy; we work hard at our craft.)

From West Berlin, Molli Wenders, using the female voice of one of his sympathizers, will call the police and do the negotiating with the State.

We are confident the State will kneel. •

AT 9:30 PRECISELY, ON THE EVENING OF THE SECOND Monday of March, six weeks after the three Munich terrorist bank robbers were incarcerated in Stammheim, Otto Kampfmann, Theresa, and Dieter Paulus, the eighteen-year-old who'd been in on the Links beating, parked a stolen English Rover at the Corner of Wilhelmstrasse and Westen Allee in Düsseldorf. Simultaneously, Gabriele Rainer, Max Gruber, and Molli Wenders parked a stolen BMW at the opposite corner, at Wilhelm and Ost Allee. The occupants of both cars were armed with Kalashnikovs and Berettas.

At 9:32 precisely, with Vanessa Dietrich driving, Viktor X, Ahab, and Fukado drove up to 37 Wilhelm in a stolen Mercedes. The lights of the car were out, the motor running; Viktor, Ahab, and Fukado wearing ski masks and carrying new Heckler & Koch handguns left the car and quietly mounted the front steps of 37. Fukado, using the key fashioned from a wax prototype he'd previously formed, opened the door. Fukado, since he knew the layout of the house perfectly, led them quietly to the bedroom of Patricia Steigmüller, the law secretary of Superior Court Judge Johann Helder.

With flashlights suddenly clicked on, they caught Judge Helder *in flagrante delicto,* so to speak, with his pretty law secretary. Fukado probed His Honor's naked flesh with his gun, as Viktor X warned him to move swiftly or he and the woman would die. Ahab knelt on the bed, his gun aimed at Fräulein Steigmüller's temple. The woman, stricken in her bed, was afraid even to close her knees. Ahab, the revolutionary leader of the Red Army Fraction, couldn't restrain himself and with his free hand leaned over to pinch her vulva.

Judge Helder, whose hands were being tied by Viktor as Fukado pointed his gun, made a sudden leap at Ahab, and Fukado struck him on the back of the head with his gun butt and knocked him out. Fukado, speaking in a soft, calm voice, told Ahab if he touched the woman again he would shoot him then and there.

"If you don't, I will," Viktor added.

As Ahab, now all serious, held his gun to the woman—she had by now covered her nakedness with a blanket—Viktor X and Fukado revived Judge Helder, wrapped him in a robe they'd brought for that purpose, tied his hands, blindfolded him, gagged him, and, their guns in His Honor's back, marched him out. Ahab begged Patricia's forgiveness, told her that it had been her beauty which had overcome him, waved the gun before her frightened face, and advised her to hold her tongue until they were gone.

Viktor X now at the wheel of the stolen Mercedes, they drove off with the kidnapped judge.

As they left the block, the other terrorists standing guard drove off in opposite directions.

Viktor took a labyrinthine course, then finally arrived

at Dietrich's, a mere three squares from the home of Patricia Steigmüller.

After Judge Helder was safely encaged in the pantry of Dietrich's flat, Viktor drove off with the Mercedes and dumped it on a side street, where Gabriele awaited him in her Porsche, and they returned to Vanessa's place.

When they entered, it was precisely 10:27 p.m.

Gabriele Rainer and Viktor X complimented each other on the preciseness of their timing. They had come in three minutes ahead of time.

At 10:45 to the second, on Molli Wenders' instructions, Helga Maier, a friend, called the Head of State in Bonn.

Viktor X and Fukado, by mutual agreement, did not inform the others of Ahab's lapse in revolutionary discipline.

• HIS HONOR, THE JUDGE, IS NOW IMPRISONED IN VANessa's well-stocked pantry. He sits on a kitchen chair, a brawny, muscular man of forty-five. His hair is graying, his jaw is tough; his eyes, when we see them, are steel blue. When we remove the gag to feed him, he curses us. But we laugh at him. He is blindfolded and bound.

Sitting opposite him in the close quarters, gun in hand, I observe him. His heart beats. Blood courses through his veins. Protected by his skull (which Fukado had to dent), his brain, so delicate an instrument, has stored a vast quantity of information. He's a learned man. Also a brave man. He has told us that if the State concedes to our demands it will prove itself bankrupt, and he will resign his office and himself organize an underground society to destroy us.

I tell him that then it would be wiser to join us—for that is exactly our aim: to prove that society as now constituted is bankrupt, has outlived its usefulness, that western civilization is a rotting corpse, that we will start afresh, construct a classless society with total freedom.

His Honor laughs. "You dream," he says.

"Yes, I dream."

Ahab, who has entered, sneers, "You've become ideological."

"No," I say, "I merely dream."

"Dreamers are dangerous to the Revolution," Ahab says. "They don't believe."

"Ideologists are by nature dogmatic," I say. "And ideology is false consciousness, another form of propaganda, the Madison Avenue shit of false revolutionaries."

"You call me and Theresa false revolutionaries," he says, fondling his Belgian 7.65.

His Honor laughs.

Ahab's looking for a fight—first, because of Fukado's and my reaction to what he did the night of the kidnapping, and, second, because we've been waiting for Wenders' message advising us that the State has agreed to our demands. Waiting is always the worst of it. It's boring. We easily lose our tempers. Like soldiers at war, we do our griping, have our quarrels in the intervals between actions. Once we're in battle, all are comrades again.

Ahab leaves, but not before twitting His Honor about what his wife will say about his having been caught between the legs of his mistress. I can't help laughing.

Now Vanessa enters. She's naked. As she stands before me in the small space, she brushes her nipples across my lips. I ask her to leave. Smiling, she goes to stand before His Honor. Of course, he's blindfolded, but he can smell her strong perfume. She presses her naked thighs against his shoulders. He stiffens. She laughs. Reaching over him so her luxuriant curly bush is impressed on his face, she takes a

paper sack of shelled walnuts from the shelf behind and above him. Her presence fills the small room. Her perfume and perspiring flesh are overwhelming. My penis erects. At His Honor's side now, she eats shelled walnuts, smacking her lips, touching his shoulder with her naked body. She reaches behind herself and unzips my fly. My erect cock pops out and with a search and find motion she sits and inserts it. I don't move. She eats walnuts noisily, leans over and attempts to put a walnut shard in His Honor's mouth. He spits it at her. She laughs and abruptly stands. There's a squish, and she leaves the pantry.

"You are wild dogs," His Honor says.

I agree. •

• AFTERWARDS, WE ALL GATHERED IN VANESSA'S APARTment.

We drank champagne. We were exhilarated.

Kampfmann, who had just returned to Düsseldorf with Fukado after dropping His Honor, still in his robe, on the steps of the Frankfurt courthouse, laughed wildly, did his dance, his jig. As victory piles on victory, he becomes more hysterical in his laughter.

Our three vain comrades (we've now forgiven them) were on their way to Libya with passports and 100,000 Deutsche Mark, to boot, in their pockets. Molli Wenders, son of an Amerikan banker, had obtained more than we had anticipated. We toasted him, our multinational financial wizard, and were sorry he wasn't present to drink with us.

The radio commentators became breathless speaking about our exploit.

The television endlessly played and replayed the images of our three comrades boarding the Air France jet.

The following day the newspapers of the world expended a thousand liters of precious ink to describe our success.

Should the media remain silent, we would die of disappointment and frustration. (No worker, no farmer, not one impoverished man or woman has yet joined our revolutionary Cause. So what victory can we enjoy but that given us by the communications media? I don't mention this to my comrades, but I think about it often.)

The State proved itself cowardly to the world. Stalin once said that the Nazis would be the icebreakers for the Revolution. It was when he commanded the German Party to yield to Hitler without a fight. Now he's been proven right. The present State in its cowardice fears the use of extraordinary measures against us—afraid the liberals and radicals will call it Nazi. And of course we would.

Gabriele sat near me all night. Her hair gleamed like brushed gold, and her eyes were soft blue as they stared deeply into mine. We held hands like lovers.

"We'll all have to separate, go deep underground, until this blows over," I said to her. "You and I will take a holiday. Yes?"

Her lips were soft on mine and my heart moved. (That's what victory does; it softens one. But how can it be avoided? We must never soften; we must always remember the Cause, the Group.)

Across the room, Ahab and Theresa were whispering to each other, also moved by our success, also softened. I was certain they were making similar plans.

Fukado, Vanessa, and I Suck were dancing together, an impish trio. Suddenly they left and went into the bedroom. Vanessa's bed is huge and circular. I was certain they would make circular love. Why not—they are free.

Dieter Paulus, who'd been with us the night we beat up Franz Links, and had stood guard the night we kidnapped His Honor, sat alone. He is—was—the youngest among us, a slender, pale-faced boy, ugly, pimply, his face raw. He kept repeating that he would never be taken by the bulls, he would die locked up, he'd rather croak in a shootout with the police, bang bang. We advised him that if he didn't act foolishly he would never be taken, to forget it. But he kept

repeating it endlessly, while drinking champagne and smoking a joint, his eyes staring into space, and we ignored him.

The radio commentator reiterated for the fiftieth time the details of the kidnapping and its resolution.

The television replayed again the scene at the airport, the arrival of our grinning comrades, their escort to the plane, its takeoff.

His Honor, we were sure, was already describing to the police how he was taken. An honest and brave man, he told them the truth. Also to his wife. However, I was certain he would not resign his judgeship.

I said that to Gabriele, and she laughed.

"Hypocrites—all of them," she said.

"Yes, All of them."

I thought of Kurt and Ilka Frankel. Unlike Gabriele's parents, they had not disowned me. How can you disown someone you do not own? Sitting there next to Gabriele, mellow, happy, soft with victory, I felt sad for them.

When the trio returned, we decided it was time to turn off the radio, the television, and to separate.

Everyone put on a wig, dressed in chic clothes. Dieter Paulus looked like a scarecrow, a pimply, ugly one. A brave scarecrow. He was to go first. Then Ahab and Theresa would follow. They were to drive to Berlin in their new metallic blue Porsche to pick up her children. She wanted to take them to Italy to stay with comrades because Franz Links, their father, was making strenuous efforts to regain them. Ahab and Theresa had forged passports and would, we were certain, have no trouble leaving the country. Then Fukado, who looked like a Japanese doll in his wig, was to leave in his silver Jaguar XKE for Switzerland where he and Molli Wenders were planning to pull a bank heist. Gabriele and I were next. It was our plan to drive in her new Mercedes sports car to Frankfurt, after which we would make plans for a holiday.

Kampfmann and Vanessa would close up the apartment and go in his white Rolls Royce to the villa in Elbchaussee-

Hamburg. We warned him: no funny stuff for a while. Dietrich said she would see to that.

We had repaid our foolish comrades for the million and a half they had expropriated for the Revolution. They were free. We drank to their freedom one more time, then to ours.

Dieter Paulus, his handgun behind his belt, said his goodbyes, and left.

As Ahab and Theresa were preparing to depart, shots were heard. Dogs barked. Mobile radios blared. The police!

We didn't panic. We dimmed the lights, and quickly escaped by our concealed hatch into the basement, then through interlaced tunnels and cellars, and finally emerged into the block behind Vanessa's. We're not as crazy, as wild, as our enemies say we are. We had done our work well. All escaped.

Except Dieter Paulus.

Four days later, when Gabriele and I arrived in Paris, we read the reports. Dieter had been instructed many times, if you see the police, just walk straight ahead—they don't know you, you don't know them. Instead he pulled his gun. He killed a policeman. They killed him.

He deserved to die. He was a fool.

Gabriele believes differently. She said he did what he did to warn us. He was a brave man.

She, of course, is a romantic. However, we'll never know.

Ahab, who is in Italy with Theresa, has already sent out word: the bull who murdered our comrade Dieter Paulus is to be rubbed out. •

• VIKTOR'S GONE FOR A FEW HOURS. HE SAID I MAY write this entry about our holiday in Paris in his journal, but I'm not to read what's gone before it. Of course, I won't, though I desperately want to, since I'm positive he

has written about me. Who isn't curious to know what another has written about oneself from the privacy of his or her soul.

Does Viktor have a soul? If he has, he must be a great actor because he is able to keep it concealed so completely most of the time, so frighteningly. He's all action and brain, and whatever feelings he has are submerged, suppressed, hidden, who knows what? It would be too simple to say that the trauma of having been abandoned by his mother and father and brought up by adoptive parents is what has sapped him of emotion. There must be something else, but what it is would be impossible for me to say.

But he doesn't fool me one bit—it is there deep inside him and sometimes it rises to the surface if only for a second. I have caught him in unguarded moments staring into space, his handsome face so sad it makes me want to cry. Or at night when I cry out in my sleep and he takes me in his arms with a gentleness I've never known. Oh, Viktor, I love you and we can yet escape before it is too late.

Also, it was his idea that we come to Paris, a city I know very well and to which he had never come before. (When he worked aboard a freighter he said he never ventured beyond the port cities.) And it was his suggestion that we not talk of politics, of our recent actions, of our comrades, of the Revolution. Let's have a real holiday, he said, we've earned it. How true. And we've done what all tourists do in Paris, have gone to the museums, to the Odéon, to the opera and *opéra bouffe,* have eaten in a three star restaurant in a private room like a banker and his mistress, have sat on the sidewalk of Les Deux Magots and have sipped a Pernod and have observed the passersby, Viktor's eyes wandering to examine the lovely chic women as I have flirted with the handsome men. We have chatted nonsense, and Viktor has laughed fullheartedly—how fantastically happy and alive he looks when he laughs like that—and we have strolled through the Bois de Boulogne hand in hand like lovers, and we have danced naked in our room, and we have made love—

made love as unsatisfactorily as ever. We are out of tune in bed, out of rhythm; he doesn't seem to understand, or it is perhaps I who don't understand. It is frustrating, goddamn it, and I have even suggested half in jest that we go to a sex therapist, and he looked at me with contempt. I can't stand it when he looks at me that way, but he can't stand my contempt for the rhetoric of the Revolution, that it's all bullshit, that we do what we do from some psychological need or to act out our hostilities and why don't we accept it as such. The clown I Suck proceeds from that posture without even being aware of it and he has a ball. (What Kampfmann, and Viktor, too, see in that beautiful cow Vanessa is something I'll never understand. Yet, I have to admit she fascinates me. She would have made a great actress if she hadn't joined up with Kampfmann and our Group. The few times she has played a role in the theater her intelligence was vibrant, profound, her Nora and Hedda were absolutely scintillating, but off the stage her brains are all lodged in her ass and tits. Onstage, it seems to me, in the guise of a fictional character her real self emerges, unfettered, free—offstage her belief that she is nothing paralyzes her brain and she utters the crassest foolishness and protects herself with her cunt. I waste my contempt on her. In a word, I am being foolish—yet, yet—I must say it. Viktor and Molli Wenders, who also keeps an account book, say that unless one writes the complete truth one is merely prattling, so I'll tell the truth. I am just dying to caress Vanessa's breasts, to take her nipple in my mouth. Just once, just once, to see what it is like. I don't think she would object, but I can't free myself to do it. There! I have said it.)

How handsome Viktor looks in the clothes he has bought for himself. Tall, marvelously built, graceful in his stiff-backed way, his magnificent head with its unruly blond curls on his sturdy yet graceful neck. He really let himself go—custom-tailored denim jeans and jacket, soft cotton turtleneck sweaters (the blue one makes his eyes even bluer and the gold of his hair more gold) and those handsome cowboy

boots. Now I am a French revolutionary, he said with a quick smile.

I have given up my usual costume for our holiday. Why are my hands quivering? Whoa, hold it! What I have written above about Vanessa's breasts has excited me so that I can't wait for Viktor to return. My God, Gabriele, I didn't know that about you. . . . Where was I? Oh, yes, my costume. The jeans I bought are so tight they reveal the most minute folds of my vulva and the slit of my ass, each buttock proud and firm. The shirts and blouses are of the most marvelous Parisian silk so that my breasts and nipples reveal themselves with the greatest of playfulness. On seeing my new costume for the first time, Viktor glared and bit his lower lip. (With Viktor at my side, I don't care if men ogle me; in fact, I enjoy it because it enrages him and makes him desire me more.) Damn him, he could love me if only he allowed himself the freedom to love. In bed he follows my lead and it is over. Why, damn him? He says with Vanessa it is different because she doesn't care for him. Perhaps I shouldn't care for him. But the bitch of it is that I do. So I fuck the world. Bang bang—you are dead, I am dead.

On Rue Jacob, he bought an excellent print of *La Liberté guidant le peuple,* the famous detail, and he has pasted it in the front of his journal. She is the only woman I have ever loved, he said with a playful little smile, his eyes glued to Liberty's bare full breasts.

She looks like Vanessa. Perhaps I'm too slender for his tastes, and I should do those exercises to enlarge my breasts and eat a lot to enlarge my ass. Oh, to hell with it. I'm every bit as beautiful as she. Still, I prefer to conceal it because usually I simply can't stand the way men stare at me, avoiding my face, my eyes, as if I were just a machine made for fucking. I'm the most intelligent of the lot, even more intelligent than Theresa, the great ideologue, and even more than Viktor with his tape recorder brain.

It's raining and Viktor went to look at the Bastille, to examine every stone. I will then be able, he said, to close my

eyes and envision it as it was stormed by the sans culottes almost two hundred years ago. It's the greatest symbol of freedom in Europe, and its storming marked the beginning of the revolutionary age. I didn't remind him as he must very well know that the sans culottes took the Bastille apart stone by stone and carted them away to use on the barricades and the Bastille he will now observe was rebuilt with new stones. Why should I be as pedantic as he? But I did remind him of the storming of the Winter Palace, and he sneered with contempt. That was pure agitprop, he said, the Bolsheviki merely walked in and took an empty shell—a symbol of everything that followed.

Yesterday, we sat in the Bois under a huge plane tree, ate cheese and bread, and drank from a bottle of red wine. Promenaders stared at us, not because what we were doing was unusual, but because we are such a beautiful couple. It's the same when we walk along the boulevards or sit at a sidewalk café. Then if I am a fucking machine, I am Viktor's and not theirs.

In the Bois, after we ate our little repast, for the first time we spoke seriously about ourselves. To my astonishment, Viktor asked me what was the earliest memory I have. I hesitated, this was something new for him, for us, and besides why should I reveal the remembrances of my early childhood, and my innermost secrets, when he would not. He understood my hesitation (when he wants to he can be terribly sensitive and perceptive) and said quietly that after I had concluded he would do likewise and I shook with excitement for it meant Viktor was accepting me into himself, that he would nourish me and care for me as I grew in the womb of his soul, and that way he would learn to love me.

It has to do with my father, I said, and I remember it with great particularity, though it occurred when I was between two and three, after Daddy came home from Essen where he had been managing a steel plant. It was before we were very rich, that I know, not because I remember it but because he once told me.

He asked Mutti to dress me up nicely—he was going to take me for a walk—and then this is what I remember exactly. It was a sunny day, and I walked with Father hand in hand towards the river, and I loved the feel of his hand over mine, its hugeness, its strength, and he strode very slowly so I could keep up with him without any trouble. Street carts had already begun to appear and near the river we stopped and Daddy bought a sausage and a small loaf of bread heaped with sauerkraut, which he carried in his hand, then led me to the riverbank, under a giant tree, where he unfolded a large handkerchief for me to sit on so I wouldn't dirty my white underthings. I lay back and looked into the leaves and remember so perfectly the laciness of the leaves and the gold sun shimmering through them into my eyes and the fantastic warmth in my heart. Daddy took out his pocket knife, cut the bread in two, and asked me to sit up so that when I ate, the juice wouldn't drip on my blouse. I remember the taste of the sausage and the kraut and licking the juice from my lips with my tongue and Father sitting alongside me also eating his part of the sausage and bread. Above us the leaves whispered, and the sun shimmered, and the river was very still; I could barely hear the sound of the water lapping on the banks. Then Father wiped my face clean, and his hands, and then the knife blade, which he folded and replaced in his pocket. Then he sat me on his lap and hugged me tightly . . . tightly . . . tightly . . . and that is all I remember of that incident, and I cannot remember any other before that.

It is not a fantasy? Viktor asked.

No, no, it's true. I've had other fantasies similar to that, but that's real. I asked Father about it once, and he told me he remembered it too.

Viktor hesitated a moment, wet his lips—it was difficult for him—but then he said, I don't know whether mine is fantasy or dream or fact, but I think it's the truth. There are really two, which seem to run together. I have no idea how old I was, but it was before Kurt and Ilka and I lived off the

land near Seehausen, so it must have been when I was a mere infant, so how could it be other than a fantasy or dream?

I am sitting at a table on a high stool, probably a highchair, and a man and woman, faces indiscernible, are quarreling and I'm banging on the table or highchair with my fists and crying. Suddenly they stop quarreling and turn to me with smiles on their faces. They were probably my mother and father. How often I have wished I could discern their faces, but no matter how hard I try, it is impossible. Is it a dream, a fantasy, I don't know, but I see the scene so realistically and have had it so frequently that I have come to accept it as a true incident.

Then there's the other, and this must be when I was already with Ilka and Kurt, yet I always think this one came before the other as if I do not wish the other to have occurred. I'm with a man and a woman, their faces also indiscernible, but it must have been Kurt and Ilka, because there's a barge; we are leaving on the barge, yet I see it as daylight and they have told me we left at night. However, I am on the barge and it's beginning to move, and I see all the warehouses along the bank burned down, except one house—a house, not a warehouse. It stands there among the ruins, the only structure that hasn't been razed by the firebombs. It is daylight, yet I see a candle burning in a window in this house. That's all I remember of it.

Kurt has told me there were several structures that remained standing in that particular area. I have walked along the Elbe there a hundred times, a thousand, but all the warehouses and residences have been rebuilt, and I can't identify the one I recollect so clearly. Perhaps it's only a fantasy, both fantasies, the single house among the ruins, the lit candle in the window, myself as a baby bawling, the man and the woman stopping their quarrel, smiling at me. Obvious, I suppose.

Viktor held my hand, stared into the distance.

I asked him if he remembered the bombings.

No, nothing. Though as you know I have dreams about bombings—Herr Doktor Freud would say they were sexual dreams—fire, intense heat, whistling bombs, flying shrapnel, an acrid odor, even the odor of sweet shit, a pleasant odor, oddly enough—is that why I like to go down on you when your back is turned?

He leered at me in jest, and I giggled. People do such strange things in bed.

But we've heard the story, he continued, of the firebombings of Hamburg so frequently, *ad nauseam,* that anyone would dream about it. Yet I have no recollection of them.

It could be you weren't in Hamburg and whoever abandoned you came on one of the barges and left you there.

It's possible, and it's also possible I just don't want to remember them.

Do you still wonder about your real parents?

It comes and it goes, sometimes it nags, hurts, then slips away. Not for a long time now, really. Now, liebchen, that's enough, he said, standing abruptly, and bringing me to my feet as he stood.

That was the end of it, but it was further than we have ever gone, and it left me with a feeling of great hope—senseless hope, really, but hope.

We walked among the trees silently for a time, each, I guess, thinking about the past.

I love my father, and there were times when I was twelve or thirteen when I had fantasies of sleeping with him. Conscious fantasies, not dreams. But when it came to the point when he would insert his penis into me the fantasy would vanish. Those fantasies stopped—from terrible fear, I suppose—after an incident we had on our private beach, where it was family custom to walk about in the nude. There was no one there but my father and me. I was about sixteen and a half. I had already been half-penetrated by Eddie Thompson, an American boy whose family wintered in Cannes. He'd gotten half way in, couldn't get any further, then popped. Enough to hurt me, make it bleed, that's all. Was

that all it was, I thought. On this afternoon Daddy and I were playing catch, and he threw the ball past me and as I chased after it he followed, trying to capture the ball before I did. We bumped, fell to our knees, laughing, facing one another. Suddenly we stopped laughing. Daddy was looking at me, staring, his great chest heaving, his lips strangely pale, trembling, and I stared at him, my heart beginning to beat furiously. I had this terrible wish that he fall on top of me with his great weight, but I forced myself to hold still, merely staring, and he stared, and my eyes, wanting to turn away, not turning away, saw his penis grow, become hard, a huge red pulsating thing, its end glistening with liquid, and I thought I would faint, but I was afraid to move, and he seemed to be afraid to move. My fear was terrible, then nausea overwhelmed me and somehow I scrambled to my feet and ran, ran, ran. Later that night, at dinner, I couldn't look at him, but he was his usual self, talking and laughing, and making jokes as if nothing had happened. From that time on I would frequently be tactless with him, make sarcastic remarks, and he would say to whomever was about that that's the way it is when one's kids grow up.

He is out of my life now, cut off, like an amputated limb. What could we possibly say to each other? Still, I miss him, but not my mother. She means nothing to me and I don't think I ever meant anything to her. A clotheshorse, a mannequin, a collector of things, things, things. Oh, to hell with her.

I daresay, Boris, my cousin, has usurped my position with the family. He resembles my father and is a neo-Nazi, I am certain. I despise him. His remarks to the press, his threat to organize a paramilitary force to destroy the Red Army Fraction have infuriated Ahab and Theresa. Viktor also. I shouldn't be surprised if he isn't marked for kidnapping or execution. Viktor has said that should that eventuality occur I must absent myself—it would not be "smart" for me to be involved. But Viktor in many ways is still *very correct*—it's almost ludicrous after all we've done in the last few years.

No, to shoot Boris would free me further from the power which holds me to the Strelsin family and fortune.

If I wanted to be *correct,* I would choose another course for myself—Strelsin A.G. and multinational power, for instance. I could run the corporation as well as any man—probably better. Now I'm free, and wish to be freer. With Viktor. The exhilaration that follows one of our adventures—I wouldn't want to lose that. Viktor says in time we'll become blasé about it, stale, but first we have to reach the peak of Molli Wenders' spiral. *That* will be an explosion! Is it next on the agenda?

Oh, bullshit! I'm telling your goddamned journal a lie, Viktor. The bare unalloyed naked godawful truth is that if you asked me to marry you and retire to a sedate, sedentary, respectable bourgeois life, with babies and family, and all that bag of shit, as I Suck Kampfmann would say, I would accept. Immediately, *tout de suite,* on the double. Now, I've said it.

That's the truth! •

THE OLD ONES

Clara Z.

A SIMPLE NOTE ON THE STATIONERY OF THE HARBOR Master, Port of Haifa, Consultant, Deborah Gershon:

> At my apartment on Abraham Lessin Street, first house across from the Haifa public beach, Friday at six. Dinner, then talk. Clara.

Friday was the following day.

Thursday night, David Grad phoned the writer from the Ben-Gurion Airport. "I'm waiting three lousy days. A strike, goddam—" caught himself, laughed. "When you're on the wrong end of a strike, you don't like it. . . . You see Clara yet? No? Tomorrow? Good. If she don't—doesn't—tell you, ask her who Anna Maria Stuhl-

mann was or is. Get her to open up, it'll do her good. It's tougher'n hell living with ghosts—and ever since that hijacking she's been seeing them night and day. I love that damned woman—hate to see her suffer. But don't push her or you'll get nothing. I gotta run. Next year in Jerusalem. So long, kid."

Clara Z.'s flat was on the third floor of a new, formless structure across from the beach where Avram ben Itzchak had sat but a few days before. Formless—a box.

Her greeting was formal, an up and down handshake in the European style. Her hand was strong. A little smile and nod of her head acknowledged the proffered bottle of Israeli wine.

She was dressed in a severely cut white suit—skirt, not pants. Her blond-gray hair was gathered in a tight bun behind her head. The skin on her face was taut, and sprinkled with freckles. She wore no makeup. Her age showed in and around her eyes, which were blue and unwavering. Her throat was unblemished, firm, without wrinkles. She wore no stockings, and her legs were shapely and tan. She wore simple blue pumps, stub-toed, with low heels.

"I'm starved," she said. "Let's eat."

She moved gracefully, with firm step. It was hard to believe she was sixty years old.

The table was set, and lit by Sabbath candles. When asked if she *bentched licht,* she said no, she wasn't religious. The large room, part living and part dining, was austerely furnished in Finnish modern, fastidiously kept except for unruly piles of magazines and books near the easy chair and sofa. One entire wall was shelved with books from floor to ceiling. Their titles were in the languages of the world.

The dinner was excellent: Polish kielbasa with boiled cabbage and potatoes, lots of Dijon mustard and half-sour pickles. The Israeli wine was sweet, and barely a drop was touched. For dessert a Near Eastern dish: yogurt, honey, cinnamon, raisins, and chips of bittersweet chocolate. Demitasses of strong Turkish coffee.

She led the conversation. Politics. She wasn't merely passing time, was testing the political sophistication of her interviewer. Her voice was contralto, and she spoke English with little trace of an accent.

After a short exchange, seemingly satisfied, she smiled. It was a generous smile, and somehow it seemed the sun, which had already set, had reversed its course.

"You wash, I'll dry," she said as she rose from the table.

The dishes put away, the kitchen tidy, she led the way to her study. Simple, neat, and businesslike. Steel desk, two chairs, file cabinets, and another wall of books.

She motioned to a chair, herself sat, and switched on the desk lamp. Pulling the tape recorder closer to herself, she said, "So I can turn it off if I want to. I've learned not to trust writers, historians, journalists, call yourselves what you wish. They will pretend to turn it off when asked, go click click, and it will still be running." A smile accompanied the remark.

She was making an effort—effortlessly, at that—not so much to woo the interviewer as to break his reserve.

"We shall soon see," she said to his remark that he was an honest man.

From a desk drawer she removed what looked like two ledgers, each imprinted in black Germanic script with the same legend: Leitz-Ordner. "I received these a few days ago," she said. "Israeli intelligence, working on informa-

tion received from an unknown source, tipped off the Swiss police that a comrade of Viktor X and Gabriele Rainer, one Steven Wenders, an American it seems, was living underground in Zurich—and in what address and in what flat. The Swiss raided the place and came away with Molotov cocktails, plastic bombs, a few dozen handguns, various documents, and these. Perhaps because of their great belief in History, with a capital "H" in the German style, Steven Wenders and Viktor X kept a record of their lives as terrorists. These Leitz-Ordners are their journals."

She laughed at the resulting excitement.

"Not yet. When we are finished with them, perhaps we'll let you see them. We also are moved to write accurate histories, and to know who exactly our enemies are—and also our friends. Incidentally, Wenders slipped away. It seems he's quit his comrades and is now on the run from the West German and Swiss police *and* his comrades. The Spanish, French, and Italian police also appear to be interested in him. The FBI has been searching for him for three or four years. He was an American Weatherman. He'll have a difficult time of it.

"Now, one thing more, please, before we proceed: you have already obtained a statement from Avram; you are not to bother him further. He's an old man, a broken man. What you've gotten from him will have to suffice." Her tone was that of someone accustomed to issuing orders to subordinates.

When so informed, she bit her lower lip. "You are right," she said. "Forgive me. I forgot myself. A bad habit—I was a commissar of sorts in Poland for over twenty years. But I ask you in good conscience to leave

the man alone—as you left Kurt and Ilka Frankel alone. I was informed of that—it was very kind of you. I really believe Avram will not be of further help to you." She now leaned over and put her hand on the interviewer's arm. It was nothing more than a gesture one makes to another when asking for a heart-felt favor.

She was told if it was at all possible, Avram wouldn't be seen again—but no promises, a story is a story. Right now it was her story that was wanted.

"We are about there," she said with a smile. "Avram and I have known each other for forty years and I look after his welfare. He has no one else."

When asked if she had someone else, she said, "I don't require anyone else." She didn't say it arrogantly, but as a simple truth. "Avram does. It came as a sudden shock to him that he does—he always thought of himself as above all that. Though he was once a KGB agent, I feel sorry for him. After all, who am I to judge?

"As for David Grad, I'm sure if he hadn't had to leave, and if you had permitted him, he would still be talking. He's an uncut diamond, but a diamond of true worth. Very sentimental. He was very unhappy when he and his wife were denied the right to join a kibbutz. 'I've always wanted to live in a socialist society,' he said. 'And die in one. If not, I'll go home.' While he was here he looked up old comrades who'd fought in Spain as members of the International Brigades. We all see each other on occasion. Avram and I met him at someone's house. Several are still, as David says it, red hots, and we argue. It's an old habit. David in a way is still a red hot, too, and spat in their faces. I befriended him; he has had wide experience politically and is very intelligent, though he con-

ceals much of it with his army of words and readiness to leap on the soapbox, as you Americans put it. I was happy when he decided to go along with Avram and me to Paris.

"When we were hijacked, both Avram and David became transformed. Avram suddenly found his old self. I have a secret suspicion he wasn't unhappy about the whole adventure. His jaw firmed and his eyes came alive, tough. Despite the flab on David's stomach, he is also a very tough man. He began to talk quietly and tersely. The two of them, and I—for I am a very tough man, too—" she smiled her radiant smile, "went among the passengers and advised them to remember that it is the weak who are chosen to die first. If the prisoner or hostage retains his dignity, his strength, his captor, even the most brutal, can't help but recognize him as human as he himself is, and finds it difficult to break the rules of human behavior. At least one must try.

"When we were in the old barracks building, it was Avram, David, and I—with the pilot, who was magnificent—who in our discussions with our fellow hostages kept their spirits high with the same advice. There were a few incidents when one or another would cry out and immediately be rewarded with blows, especially from the Brute.

"The young woman, Gabriele Rainer—"

Clara Z. was interrupted at this point and advised that the interviewer would prefer to have her oral history first, and then her statement about the hijacking. She said that she was old-fashioned and found it difficult to parade herself naked before a stranger, that she would prefer to go ahead as she was. David Grad had warned against push-

ing her, so the interviewer nodded acquiescence, and she resumed.

"The young woman, Gabriele Rainer, seemed to enjoy the Brute's cruelty. To her the hijacking was an adventure. I found it difficult to believe she was very political. That she loved Viktor was obvious. When they entered First Class in Athens, I thought they were on their honeymoon. Beautiful man and woman. Their faces were badly bruised. David thought they'd had a fist fight. I laughed at him. Only men can be so blind. I told him it was the way they made love. He looked bewildered as if it had never occurred to him that there are people who did such things when they made love. He can recount with precise detail the atrocities committed by Hitler and Stalin, but knows absolutely nothing about the atrocities ordinary human beings commit in the privacy of their homes. Really, he's an innocent.

"Gabriele Rainer and Max Gruber could be spontaneously cruel, but not Viktor. He always appeared self-restrained. Before he could shoot someone, he would have to think it all out, find philosophical reasons for it. Once, when the Brute began to beat someone gratuitously, Viktor ordered him to stop. When they began to separate Israeli from non-Israeli, Avram remembered the incident—he saw more in Viktor than I saw—and he suggested that I speak to him, and to do so in German. 'That will break him down a bit. Later we'll be able to use him for gaining time.' Avram was obsessed with the need to gain time. He believed the longer the terrorists waited before shooting us, the better our chances. Both of us had faith the Israeli government would mount a raid. So did David.

"So I stepped up to Viktor—I had already been separated from the non-Israelis, and I can tell you I did not like the feeling one bit—and asked him, speaking German, if he wasn't ashamed, a German revolutionary, an anti-Nazi, to be separating Jews for possible extermination? Wasn't he reenacting in some measure the horror of the final solution? Were they going to tattoo our wrists next?

"David had already jumped up—though an American he had been kept with the Israelis—and was speaking in anger. I really believe that if I had let him go on, he would have attacked Viktor. That is when I entered into it. David had the good sense to quiet himself. I spoke in a firm, yet soft voice in Viktor's own language. Ahmed ben Hussein, sham Arab, sham revolutionary, could see I wasn't afraid. By which I do not mean I was without fear. As I spoke to him, his face reddened; he became flustered; his mouth was dry; he kept wetting his lips. I could see he wasn't able to 'liquidate his human feelings'—a phrase that appears again and again in his ledger. He was seeded with doubt.

"Now he spoke to me for the first time. 'I'm not a murderer,' he said. 'I am a revolutionary. You are not to be exterminated, merely held until your government concedes to our demands. It is simply that you are worth more to *your* government than the non-Israelis are to theirs. We aren't anti-Semitic. And if we do have to kill all of you, it will be your government which will bear the guilt, not us.'

"He resumed reading names from the list. Avram at my side whispered that it had gone well. Soon the non-Israelis were gone. A nun and another Frenchwoman

wished to remain with us, but were preemptively taken away with the others. Only we remained, our people, and David, and the crew. I salute them. I hope the nun and the Frenchwoman are sainted—and I don't mean that facetiously.

"Our people became more frightened, a bit of panic set in—I began to feel a loss of nerve myself. Just the mechanics of the separation evoked a terrifying odor. Avram, the ex-KGB agent—I am very glad he is an ex—calmed me down. Though it was now obvious, he said, that the target was Israel, the terrorists had made a blunder. They thought they were bringing greater pressure to bear on Israel, but the contrary was true. While the citizens of other countries were with us, the Israelis would have felt more—not less—pressure to concede to the demands of the terrorists. With their own citizens they would feel freer to take a chance. I don't think our government would or could admit that, but now I think it is true. When those that fight us come to understand that little truth, then perhaps they will be more amenable to peaceful discourse. Then it will be up to us to be amenable as well.

"Avram also advised me to greet Viktor with a friendly nod whenever he entered the barracks to stand his turn at guard. 'Accept him as a human being, he will unconsciously respond in kind. *He will remember he is human.* That is the only chance a victim has with his victor.' He smiled for his little pun. 'That will give us another day, perhaps another two days.'

"I did as he advised us. Then it began to backfire—Gabriele started to notice, and she became infuriated. She couldn't keep her eyes off him, off me. Her face

turned bitter, became mottled with ecxema which she scratched until it bled. They had their quarters upstairs, and when they were relieved one evening we could hear her cursing him, followed by a sharp slap. Avram advised me to stop giving any attention to Viktor; it was enough. I pitied that young woman. It was her strange love for Viktor which had brought her this far—and now she was damned if he wouldn't come with her to the end. No doubt she thought of herself as a free woman, but she wasn't free because she did not avail herself of the free choices, few as they are, a human being has. It was not her father's fault, or her mother's—it was her own. I did as Avram suggested, and she seemed to relax. It was already four days, and all the guards, especially Max Gruber, were becoming impatient. Jaime Valdés, Khouri were beginning to assert their brutality, too. Since then we've learned we didn't have much time to go before they were to begin killing us, a few hours—twenty each day, with photographs sent to the world press as proof of their so-called revolutionary zeal.

"Every now and then when the Brute stood guard he would raise his gun, aim it at someone, pretend to pull the trigger. The person who was his target would scream. Max Gruber would laugh. If Gabriele was present, she would merely shrug. Not the Arabs. They are very serious terrorists. If one of them raises a gun, he does not pretend, he shoots.

"Many of the hostages wept and prayed that our government would yield. That would have been calamitous. If one concedes to terror, one is lost. Whether individually or collectively. David said, 'It's a matter of who becomes tired first, loses his nerve first. If you hold out long

enough, just keep fighting, they will become tired, lose their nerve and quit. If you get tired first, good-bye!'

"Simple, perhaps, but the plain truth. Thus far the Israeli government and people have not become tired or lost their nerve. Unfortunately, neither have the terrorists.

"History has already taught us that those who cry and beg are the first to go to the wall. Some were weak, forgot, cried, and begged. Avram, David, and I did the best we could with them. I also kept after them to be tidy and clean. Cleanliness helps to keep oneself human. When the toilets stopped working and began to overrun, I spoke to Gabriele who was on duty. She turned her back on me, seeing to it that the stock of her Kalashnikov slapped at me. I turned to Viktor. I knew what I was about. When he responded that he would speak to someone about it, she cursed him in as foul language as I have ever heard on the waterfront—in the accents of someone who had gone to the finest finishing schools. She had 'liquidated her human feelings' for the entire world except Viktor. Even for herself. She was lost, poor woman. . . .

"On the sixth day, Avram told me it will have to happen soon, perhaps the end of the day, or tomorrow they're going to start killing. He would lie in his corner, his eyes half-closed, and observe them. He once told me that when he was a KGB agent others would do the interrogations, he would merely stand by and observe. He knew exactly when a human being was about to break. Now he was reading their faces as you or I would read a stop and go traffic sign. They were ready to go. The Russian Kalashnikovs they carried were oiled, polished, loaded. (I, incidentally, know the gun well. Very accurate. Overheats a

bit too quickly.) Jews were again going to die simply because they were Jews.

"I also would lie on my mattress with eyes half-closed, observing our captors, particularly Viktor, Gabriele, and Max Gruber. They are my children, I once thought—mine and Avram's. Not David's—he'd had the courage to see clearly through his slitted Tatar eyes—better to live an outcast, a pariah to old comrades and friends, than to remain wedded to the guillotine. They were our children, these so-called revolutionaries. Avram and I had each in our own way helped to destroy the moral character of the great quest for a freer world, a more equitable world, because we hadn't the decency to say no, human life is more important than our great dream, and there can be no great dream worth a dram once human life becomes less important than the great dream. They are our children, as we were Lenin's and Stalin's children, as they in turn were Nechaiev's children. The necessary murders, the necessary lies, the necessary guile and deception. Could we say it had begun with Robespierre? Murders piled upon murders. Until now our great quest is awash with blood. I would lie on my dirty mattress and observe them through half-closed lids, and in my heart I could feel the tears dropping one by one. My swinish children. . . ."

Clara was silent now, gnawing at her lower lip, staring down at her hands. Then she shook her head, smiled wanly as she raised her eyes. "I'm sorry. You know the rest. . . ."

It was suggested that perhaps it was time to call it a day and she nodded in agreement, then switched off the machine and rose to her feet.

"Return on Sunday morning—tomorrow's the Sabbath,

my day of rest. We'll have breakfast together. Then, if you insist, I'll relate the details of the long but uneventful life of Clara Z."

After a slight hesitation, she was quietly asked who is or was Anna Maria Stuhlmann?

There was no response in her eyes—just a quick blink, a flicker, that was all. As she turned to walk ahead through the doorway, a short quick explosion, "David Grad—big mouth!"

It was obvious a blunder had been made.

At the door, she shook hands, then grimaced as tears appeared in the corners of her eyes. "It's nothing. I'm tired. Those two young ones—their faces haunt me. When you read his journal, you'll see why—their sort of love, and the terror—for them synonymous words." Abruptly, she closed the door and was left alone with their faces. . . .

THE YOUNG ONES

Viktor and Gabriele

VIKTOR DROVE THE VOLKSWAGEN; GABRIELE SAT AT HIS side. The first time for them, still they were certain of themselves, each knew his and her own capabilities, and that of the other.

As they waited for a traffic light to change, they glanced at one another and touched hands for a moment. He smiled reassuringly, and she grinned. "Molli Wenders was wrong," she said hoarsely, "when he remarked you had a cold heart for one with such hot ideas. He mistakes calmness for coldness—a common error." Viktor laughed, and she joined him.

Still, as Viktor released the clutch and the car picked up speed, they were tense with emotion, high on anticipation—hearts beat faster, temples throbbed. They knew

soon there would be a bursting, like small black suns exploding, and then would come a momentary sadness like that which follows on a dying, then rest and sleep. Before them a huge black Mercedes sped quietly along the broad nightlit boulevard like a hearse on its way to a burying.

Viktor's gloved hands tightened on the wheel as he saw they were but two blocks from their clandestine encounter. His blue deeply inset eyes peered straight forward, unwavering, with a persistent calmness. His broad thick shoulders pressed hard against the backrest as if to quiet an involuntary trembling. His square handsome face and head were ornamented by a mass of heavy blond hair. From his full lips protruded a cigar, smoke curling from its stub end.

Gabriele sat slumped in her seat, her feet curled beneath her—she was as limber as a gymnast—the coarse texture of her baggy trousers stretched taut from outspread knees to slender belly. She could feel the heat rising from her center as her gloved hands tightened on the Russian Kalashnikov, polished black-blue, ugly in its lethalness.

The rear lights of the Mercedes flashed red as its brakes were applied before turning right at the upcoming corner.

Gabriele unfolded her legs and sat forward, the Kalashnikov held firmly in her left hand as the right reached for the door latch. As Viktor swung the car around the corner, they could see the Mercedes already stopped at the curb, parked before it a red Porsche, its driver's door open and Alex in tails and white tie stepping out. He carried a white oblong florist's box.

The banker Boris Strelsin was sliding from the rear seat of the Mercedes as his driver-bodyguard held the door.

Viktor braked to a stop to the rear left behind the Mercedes. As Gabriele leaped out, the Kalashnikov on the ready, the bodyguard quickly drew his gun. Alex shot him down with a burst of three. The report of Gabriele's gun seemed but an echo. Strelsin fell atop his driver. A trickle of blood slipped down a crack of the pavement into the street.

A woman across the way screamed, a window slammed shut as Viktor coolly put a bullet from a Heckler & Koch handgun into the temple of each fallen man. It hadn't been necessary; they were already dead.

Alex had the Porsche in second as Viktor leaped back into the moving Volks, Gabriele now driving. Viktor reached behind him for the Mollie and calmly lit its fuse with his smoking cigar. His hand out the window, he heaved it up and behind them. They could hear the breaking glass, the roar and rush of flame. By that time Alex had turned the Porsche left at the next corner and had disappeared. Gabriele drove another block and turned right. She zigzagged the car from block to block and in a few minutes pulled over near an emptying theater, where Viktor and she abandoned the stolen car and were lost in the crowd.

They strolled arm in arm and Viktor could feel the intense heat emanating from her armpits. She was controlling her breathing, slowing it down as she turned to smile at him. He spoke nonsense to her.

When they stood before the door to the flat off Ku'damm, Viktor glanced at his watch. "Twenty-three minutes to the second," he said with a smug smile.

They undressed in the dark, letting their clothes fall to the floor. Then Gabriele threw herself into his arms with a stifled scream as he spoke soothingly to her.

Always before when they made love, Viktor followed Gabriele's lead. But now when she demanded that he enter her, "Hurry, Viktor, hurry!" he refused, laughed aloud, continued to caress her body, slowly, langorously. As she became more frantic, his caresses became more brutal, he began to knead her flesh with his strong fingers, to punish it. He brought his sex close to hers, almost to enter, then withdrew. She began to curse him, to claw at him. He laughed. He became more brutal, crueler, bit her shoulder deeply, clasped her flesh in a strong hand and twisted and turned so she screamed. She clenched her teeth, fought him back, ripping at him with her nails, pleading with him, demanding that he enter. He conceded, she opened herself wide to him, prepared to clamp him to her with her long powerful thighs. He laughed. Withdrew. She scrambled to her knees, threw clenched fists at him, reached clawed fingers for his eyes. He laughed. He grasped her outflung arm and twisted it backward until she almost fainted from the pain. She clenched her teeth and did not cry out. He flipped her to her stomach, entered her from behind, withdrew. Flipped her to her back, entered her frontally, withdrew. Behind clenched teeth she raged, cursed him. They fought wildly, panting, cursing each other. He tasted blood from a split lip, his, hers. He felt free of his terror. And suddenly she, too. He understood, at last, he understood. He understood nothing, except that he wanted to feel. Their bodies raw, drenched in gritty sweat, Gabriele screaming behind clenched teeth, he abruptly entered her, cruelly, brutally, clamped her to him with his muscular arms so every bone

in her body groaned, flexed almost to breaking point, and now she opened her mouth and screamed and he pressed his open mouth to hers, now together they screamed, the sound echoing in their skulls, shattering all thought and feeling, explosion of bone, blood-red flames, dismembered limbs, burning flesh. Rest. Sleep. Waking. Sleep again. Waking. I can feel! I love him, love him! Can feel! Love him!

On a slab in the mortuary of the City of West Berlin lay the nude body of a thirty-five year old muscular male, skin flawless except for a small appendectomy scar, blond hair, blue eyes, killed by a burst of three bullets from a Russian Kalashnikov in and around the heart, also a small caliber bullet hole in his temple. Assailants unknown. Wallet containing five hundred Deutsche Mark and credit cards untouched.

He was identified by his father Paul and his uncle Martin as Boris Strelsin, banker and member of the board of directors of Strelsin Aktiengesellschaft. He left a wife named Helena and two children, a boy named Friedrich and a girl named Marianna. At the identification of his son, Paul Strelsin wept. Martin Strelsin pounded his huge fist against the wall.

In another room, on another slab, lay the nude body of a twenty-eight-year-old heavily muscled male, skin flawless except for a large birthmark on his upper right thigh, brown hair, green eyes, killed by a burst of three bullets from a Beretta semi-automatic in and around the heart, also a small caliber bullet hole in his temple. Wallet containing fifty Deutsche Mark, driver's license and a picture of his mother and father left untouched.

He was identified by his father Helmut, a hammerman in a tool and die foundry, and his mother Gretel, daughter of greengrocers, as Thomas Hayden, chauffeur and bodyguard of the deceased Boris Strelsin. At the identification, Gretel Hayden paled, cried out, and fainted. Helmut Hayden firmed his jaw, restrained his tears, and held his wife's head on his lap as attendants revived her.

In the flat off Ku'damm, Gabriele awoke with a cry, trembling violently. Viktor, roused, held her close, whispered soothingly to her, kissed first one eye and then the other gently, held her until her trembling ceased, her breathing became regular.

After he was certain she was again asleep, Viktor X rose from the bed, walked in the darkness to the study, where he lit a desk lamp and withdrew his Leitz-Ordner ledger from a drawer. He sat and wrote the following entry:

• It went exactly as planned. From the moment we began tailing the black Mercedes to the time we entered the flat took exactly twenty-three minutes. For our first assassination, we were truly professional.

Boris Strelsin, neo-Nazi, is dead. He was a powerful enemy who called for the formation of a paramilitary group to counteract the Red Army Fraction. The decision to execute him was made after discussion with Ahab, Theresa, Alex, Gabriele, Max Gruber and myself. Molli Wenders dissented. Molli disapproves of the taking of human life for the Revolution. After six thousand years of human slaughter he still believes human life is sacred. It would be ridiculous were it not for the fact that Molli's an excellent and loyal comrade whose beliefs must be respected. He does his work his way.

We do ours our way. The Revolution requires that we liquidate our human feelings, otherwise we reach stasis. Molli will one day learn that.

Tonight I finally rebelled against Gabriele and took her my way. It turned out that was what she really wanted. In return, for the first time with her I truly felt. It might very well prove to be a turning point in our affair. She loves me, of that I'm certain, but I do not wish to love her. Since I write only the truth in my ledger I have to admit that I find her not only exceedingly beautiful, but deeply touching. She wants to give me her life. But I can't give her mine—my life belongs to the Revolution. Right now I feel torn in two, which is dangerous for one in my position. I must be careful. . . . There, she has just cried out again and again for her father. Poor Gabriele. . . .

Well, Viktor, you have at last killed. It wasn't so bad. •

THE MORNING AFTER THE ASSASSINATION OF BORIS Strelsin, Viktor and Gabriele showering together saw the black and blue marks, the welts, the deep scratches, the bruised lips of the other and said nothing. For what they saw was ample proof that their strange passage had at long last been deeply satisfying. They had made an advance. As they soaped one another, they did so gently. And before they left the shower, without a word they embraced, held on to each other for a long moment, then reluctantly parted.

They dressed, she in her baggy trousers, overly large sweater, and clogs, he in khaki chino pants and shirt, and workshoes—their uniforms—and abandoned the apartment. Another had been found for Gabriele under a fictitious name by an attorney for the Red Army Fraction.

Gabriele drove them in her new red Mercedes sports car, also bought and registered for her by the same attorney, to Schöneberg, Molli Wenders' flat.

As Ahab carried on a hot affair with his guns, always caressing them, sleeping with them, compulsively exposing them in the middle of a meeting, practicing his movie draw, fastest draw in the West, so Steve Wenders tinkered endlessly with his bombs—petrol and plastic. In his pantry transformed into workshop gleamed a platoon of Molotov cocktails—Mollies, his lovely maidens.

Steve was a slender spire of a man, his black hair piled high atop his head, ogival, his face long and thin, pocked with the scars of acne, yet an attractive man. He was, as he jestingly called himself, a disciplined and systematic German-American who had meticulously set limits to his terrorism. He bombed banks and other institutions of power, and so far not one human being, not *even* a policeman, had been injured. "I destroy the mansions of finance capital, thus far the only true internationalism." His scruples didn't prevent him from supplying bombs and guns to his comrades. What they did with their arms was their affair, not his.

Wenders' apartment was sparsely furnished in the pure Bauhaus style, and his wardrobe overflowed with expensive clothes, all paid for by Deutsche Mark stolen from banks, ransom money the RAF had gained from the kidnapping of a State prosecutor, and his share of the allotment given them by the Arab socialist el-Qaddafi. Molli planned his revolutionary acts so perfectly, that the police had never been able to identify him with the Red Army Fraction, and they had not even a suspicion of his connection with the others. So far as the public knew Steven Wenders had inherited a fortune and lived the life of the

idle rich. Like Viktor X, Molli kept a journal in a Leitz-Ordner. Meticulous and scrupulous in his dealings with his fellow terrorists, Molli was a thoughtful man, and pleasant company.

As Gabriele and Viktor entered Molli's flat, they were greeted with shouts of congratulations from Ahab, Theresa, Molli, I Suck Kampfmann, and the elegantly suave Alex, their cohort of the previous night. Spread across the living room rug—a Picasso original—were the morning papers. A television set was on, as was a radio. There was the sweet dry scent of marijuana hovering in the air above the chessboard between Molli and Alex, the reason, perhaps, why Molli's knight was about to pounce upon Alex's bishop seemingly unaware that such a move would leave his king vulnerable to the opposing queen.

"We hit the front page of every sheet in Europe," Ahab said happily.

Otto Kampfmann, as always in his dirty T-shirt with the red imprint I SUCK!, said, "We'll give them something that'll make them shit out of their ears."

They ignored him. All had read every word in every newspaper report of the assassinations, had heard every radio commentator and observed every television play and replay of the covered bodies of Strelsin and Thomas Hayden, his bodyguard. Alex, impeccable in dark blue hopsacking, blue chambray shirt and silk maroon tie, had already described in technical, though amusing, detail, his version, now Viktor and Gabriele would give theirs.

As a defected comrade had said in an interview, "Without reporting there would be a void. We would be nothing."

Now they listened intently as Gabriele related how

she'd felt during the drive to the rendezvous, following the black Mercedes. "When I saw the back of Boris's large head, his thick neck, I wanted to lean out the window and shoot him then and there, I was so excited, scared, too, and I was afraid if I waited until the rendezvous I wouldn't be able to do it. My first time, a bloody virgin. Viktor, as usual as solid as a rock, touched my elbow and settled me down. When I saw Alex appear in white tie and tails, the long florist's box in his hand, I almost burst out laughing, thinking it's like in a movie, not real, the Kalashnikov will shoot blanks. Alex moved so gracefully, so easily and I followed his lead. Cousin Boris didn't crumple, he fell like an axed tree on top of the other man. A woman in a white coat across the street screamed, I could see her distinctly as in a slow motion shot, for a moment I thought I should shoot at her, but an open window on the third floor in the building next door was shut violently and caught my attention. Really, I was relieved. As I'd leaped from the Volks I'd seen this open window and I thought I'd have to shoot whoever it was. After I shot Boris, I glanced upwards ready to squeeze out a burst."

Molli muttered something about things spiraling, but no one paid him any attention as Gabriele described their flight.

"As we drove away, my teeth were chattering, my stomach had a terrible cramp and I thought I was going to mess my pants. Viktor kept speaking quietly to me, what he said I don't know, but it soothed me until I caught my breath, and then I began to breathe slowly, as Theresa had instructed me. After we ditched the car, I could barely wait till we got to the apartment. My hands

as I undressed seemed enlarged, fat, not mine. I ripped a button from my pants—see," she said, raising her sweater above her waist to show them the loose threads. "I came almost as soon as Viktor touched me." She glanced at Viktor and saw him staring directly into her eyes, and she lowered hers and said nothing more.

"For the first time, you did marvelously," Theresa said. "The reports said he died instantly."

"You're a real pro, Gaby, a real pro," Ahab said, eyeing her.

Gabriele smiled her thanks.

Viktor's report was shorter, as was expected of him, terser, without emotion. He related how he'd picked up the new Volks ten minutes after its owner had parked, locked it, and entered a movie house a few blocks away. "I followed him to assure myself he wouldn't be returning too quickly. I popped the lock and crosswired it in less than five minutes." He concluded his side of it quickly, without revealing how he'd felt, since he thought it unnecessary.

But Molli wanted to know. "It was the first time for you, too, the killing of a human being in cold blood. How did you feel?"

"In my stomach, excited, scared as Gabriele. In my head, it was necessary; it was a decision we made, and I did it."

Theresa, the oldest—forty-one—face gaunt, cropped hair disordered, soft body slack in the old-fashioned ruffled dress she wore, said quietly, "Boris Strelsin was the embodiment of capitalism. A capitalist is not a real individual but the embodiment of the socio-economic functions of the means of production which he owns, as

well as the exploitation of workers in search of profits. Thus, Viktor's feelings have nothing to do with it. He himself is the embodiment of the revolutionary working class seeking to right the injustice which is capitalism. It is as simple as that."

Viktor looked at her with an amused smile. "Thanks," he said drily.

As Theresa turned to take Gabriele's hand and lead her to a corner to talk, Molli, who refused to let it drop, said, "The bodyguard's name was Thomas Hayden, a working man, and not a Nazi. What was he the embodiment of?" He looked at Alex, Hayden's assassin.

Alex, darkly handsome, saturnine, smiled affectionately at him. "He who serves Nazis is a Nazi, Molli, accept it."

"He was a working man earning his living."

"There are better ways to earn a living, like manufacturing bombs, buying guns, and robbing banks. Come off it, Molli!"

They all looked sharply at Alex now. Though he'd spoken quietly, with that amused smile on his face, his short powerful body had fallen into the feral stance of a predator ready to strike. He had joined them in their acts of terror; they had accepted him knowing little about him, except what one of the RAF lawyers had told them: he hunted Nazis. When he cornered one, he killed him. They accepted it as a given that if any among them did his or her work without fear, it was the handsome Alex. He was solitudinous, none knew much of his private life or habits, and if there was any among them he favored it was Molli Wenders, hence they were startled at his reaction to Molli's probing.

Ahab, not a leader for nothing, unwound his length from a Mies van der Rohe chair, stood, a tall powerful man with a pug's face, hardly the face of the son of two prestigious art historians. Towering over Molli, he said, "How high does your spiral curl? So far you've been lucky, that's all. One of these days a Molli bomb will kill somebody and then you won't be so high and mighty—a typical pious Amerikan."

I Suck giggled as Ahab suddenly drew his Belgian 7.65 from behind his belt in a mock draw.

"I was merely asking," Molli said smiling, yet in no way backing off, then returned to the chess board. "My move." His knight captured the bishop, and now Alex smiled, too.

"You've left your king open to my queen. Why do you make it so easy?" And they both laughed.

Gabriele, drawing on the joint Theresa had passed to her, kept her eyes on Viktor as Kampfmann and he viewed the covered bodies of Boris Strelsin and his bodyguard on the television. Returning the weed to Theresa, she said, "It's interesting how violence and sex are so intimately related."

"Obviously," Theresa said in her tired yet superior way, closing her eyes as she inhaled.

"It's a phenomenon you ought perhaps to expatiate upon in a learned essay," Gabriele said mockingly.

Ahab, who had gone over to join Viktor and Kampfmann, now announced to no one in particular, "I have to go take a crap," twirling his pistol on a long strong finger as he headed for the toilet.

Theresa smiled at Gabriele, acknowledging the dig. "After the revolution is won, and I have more time. I'll

call it *The Class Struggle, Love and Terror: An Infantile Disorder.*" Gabriele laughed quietly. "Probably it will turn out to be a reactionary marriage at which Freud will do the officiating."

"Didn't the East German security police touch on it when you went into exile after the department store action?"

"They touched only my body after lessons," Theresa said with a grimace. "I was younger, prettier, and less tired then. They were always ready to touch, despite their puritanical belief that women like us, who live freely, are whores. Like so many puritans, they really let go with whores. In any event, what you really want to know is my relationship to the Party and the East Germans—they stopped sending me and Ahab money when they saw we never followed their instructions."

"I could hardly care less," Gabriele muttered.

"I think, my dear Gabriele, that you're an adventuress," Theresa said in an even though loud voice, wanting everyone to hear her.

"And I think you all talk shit," I Suck yelled, having been quiet longer than usual for him. He had jumped to his feet, which exercise made his fat pectorals squirm under I SUCK! "Serious shit, but shit. Revolution's fun, a joke which we play on the establishment. You all take it too seriously. That's why the working masses ignore us. If we make them laugh, they'll join us in flocks."

"Like after the Löbe funeral," Alex interjected. His detestation of Otto Kampfmann was obvious.

Kampfmann ignored him. "It's time we tackled the Jewish question, rid ourselves and Germany once and for all of this idiotic guilt fixation. . . . Look at you—sud-

denly your sphincters have closed tight, sweat forms on your foreheads, all breathing has stopped." Indeed, it had. "In a few months the anniversary of *Kristallnacht* will be marked by high seriousness. Speeches, speeches, and more speeches. We should plan our own festivities." He beamed when he saw they were paying strict attention. He liked nothing better than performing stage center. "Dressed in bedouin costumes, we should bomb the rebuilt Jewish Center on Fasanenstrasse. It will show we respect nothing. . . ."

"Spiraling out of control," Molli said.

"Let him go on," Alex said, his dark eyes fixed on Otto, the tip of his tongue wetting his lips.

"You're going too far, Kampfmann."

Otto laughed wildly. His titties bounced. His feet jigged. "Viktor, you're still a good Social Democrat like your Mutti. All of you. You've bombed banks, killed a guard or two, kidnapped for ransom, beaten reporters, killed a banker, but when it comes to this Jewish thing, this fixation, I am going too far. To make revolution we must first destroy orderliness, respectability. Chaos will water their bowels, loosen their assholes—oh, how luxuriously the shit will flow. Everyone will run to hide in his shower. It is the jesters of the world who tell the truth. We must learn from Shakespeare. Nothing is sacred to a jester. Nothing! The past is dead. Total freedom's the answer. Enough of this Jewish fixation. If we wear the flowing garments of the bedouin, it will show our solidarity with those who fight Jewish expansionist imperialism."

He stood triumphant, his hands spread wide, his pigtail resting on his shoulder, I SUCK! hiked high on his tits.

Ahab, who had entered, slowly strolled into the center

of the room, his arms dangling at his sides, his brutal, shrewd face serious. As he approached Kampfmann, his right hand moved swiftly to his belt and suddenly, just like Gary Cooper in *High Noon,* his hand held the Belgian 7.65 aimed at Otto's heart.

"For God's sake!" said Theresa, the pastor's daughter, "Don't shoot him here."

"Why not?" asked Alex.

Gabriele laughed. "We're all going crazy."

A stench pervaded the room. Kampfmann had emptied his lower intestines.

Molli leaped to turn on the air conditioner.

Ahab doubled over in laughter.

I Suck ran to hide in the shower.

"Do you think he really means it?" Gabriele asked, looking at Viktor.

"He means it all right," Molli said, lighting, puffing on, and then passing a joint to Theresa, who drew and passed it on to Alex.

"Everyone makes revolution in his own style," Viktor said. "What's there to get excited about?"

"Infantile bourgeois anarchism," Theresa remarked. "Despite what he says, revolution's a serious matter. You of all people know that, Viktor."

"Otto's more serious than he knows."

Ahab looked at Theresa, his face serious, his eyes shrewd. "We gave him birth. He's our second generation. What do we do with him?"

"I know exactly what to do with him," Alex said softly. "Even Molli's spiral must have a ceiling."

"What do you say, Viktor?" Gabriele said, inhaling on the joint, then passing it to Ahab.

Viktor thought a moment before speaking. Then he turned his head from one to the other until his eyes met Gabriele's. "Why should we stop at this one? Otto hasn't said it subtly, but what he has said goes to the root—not only of the established order, but to the root of ourselves. This act will free us totally from our past. Stop and think about it. We obliterate the past, we obliterate history—then there's only the Revolution. We are the Revolution. If it serves no other purpose than the psychological one of freeing us, then it's worth it."

His long well-shaped fingers combing the curls on his head, he smiled at Gabriele. He was certain she would understand. "And you, Gabriele?"

Yes, Gabriele did understand. Free of the past, free of their fantasies, free of their dreams, free of their remembrances. "Yes," she said, "that should do the trick. We have to go all the way."

Alex, rising and lowering on the balls of his feet, his hands fisted, dark face darker with the flush of blood, said so softly they could barely hear him, "There is a past, and there is a history. We are not all X's like you, Comrade Viktor. I'll not be a Jew-baiter. And I'll not tolerate Jew-baiting. That's out. The spiral has stopped."

"Ditto," Molli said. "I'm not one for psychocomedy."

"I have to go home to my children," Theresa suddenly said. She looked fidgety, nervous, was biting her lip.

Playing with his Belgian 7.65, Ahab gave his decision. "If you two and Otto want to create chaos in your own silly way, go ahead. However, you're not to involve the Red Army Fraction in any way. It'll just be another one of Kommando Kampfmann's games. But you have to

stay quiet for a time, last night's transaction is going to raise quite a fuss." He laughed now, twirling his gun.

When Kampfmann returned to the room, a big shameless smile on his obese face, he was so informed.

As Otto slipped into his leather jacket before leaving, Viktor and Gabriele at his side, Alex, still speaking softly, said, "If you go ahead with your plan, Herr Comrade—and you two nihilists, as well—I will personally liquidate you in the name of the Revolution."

"Don't be a shit, Alex, you're not a Jew."

"Whether or not I am is immaterial. I kill Nazis. That's the way I have my fun. The more the jollier."

"All right, get going, you three. Before the party gets rough." Ahab turned to Theresa with a smile. "Don't you remember, darling, the children are in Italy? The Jewish question makes you too damned nervous."

After Viktor, Gabriele, and Otto left, Theresa, calmer now, said with a sibyl's certitude, "Viktor and Gaby are both fools. He's going with Kampfmann so he can get to rough up Vanessa—incidentally, you all noticed the marks on their faces this morning, I'm sure. As for Gabriele, she goes along because she hopes Viktor will learn to love her so she can, as she puts it, 'stop fucking like a machine.' She fucks like a machine, doesn't she, my dear?"

Ahab grinned a large yellow-toothed smile.

Alex, who had observed them with contempt, said, "You understand, both of you, that you should have prohibited it. They follow your lead as well as the rest of us. If they go through with it, I jump off that famous train of history—you know, the one that ends in the Gulag." He laughed now.

"Theresa and I are going to pick up Fukado, and then go to Hamburg where we're going to settle with Franz Links once and for all. He has also jumped off that train. You understand that, don't you, Alex?"

"Now, now, Ahab, you're becoming a parody, the fastest draw in the West, wow!"

Theresa and Ahab were arranging their wigs, and Ahab joined Alex's laughter. "You're just high-strung after last night. Forget it."

After Ahab and Theresa left, Molli said to Alex, "You are a Jew, aren't you?"

"I was until I started killing." Alex's smile was so charming Molli wanted to kiss him, but was shy about it since he had never kissed a man before. "Now I live in limbo until God forgives me."

"You can't escape, you know."

"Like you, I'm still unknown to the police. I can just walk out."

"As famous as the Revolution's train of history, is the Revolution's iron law: once you're in, you can't walk out."

"Thanks for the friendly warning. And you? Before your spiral gets out of hand, why don't you go home?"

"I'd love to," Molli said, scratching at his scarred face. "I really miss it. But like Viktor, I'm now an X, homeless and parentless. Enough now," he said, turning away from his friend's eyes.

Before he opened the door to leave, Alex said, "I had to ditch the gun I used last night, give me a Heckler & Koch, a new one."

Armed from Molli's arsenal, he departed.

Molli Wenders stared at the closed door for a few mo-

ments, smiled to himself, then went to his desk, opened his Leitz-Ordner, and in his neat Spencerian hand wrote down the events of the past few days, from the planning of the murders of Boris Strelsin and Thomas Hayden to the moment Alex left.

Then he added:

• Viktor and Gabriele now act according to laws they can't control. (The sight of them this morning—they have no idea how they're brutalizing each other.) Viktor boasts he knows the whole truth and knows only half of it. Gabriele knows the whole truth but doesn't give a two-bit damn. They, like the rest of us, have completely departed from their original course. They are spinning wildly in a spiral that ends in oblivion.

Am I, Steven Gregory Wenders, Minneapolis, Exeter, Swarthmore, Durango, Colorado, next?

What I wouldn't give for a hot dawg! •

IT WAS AS THEY WERE DRIVING FROM TEMPELHOF Airport where they had picked up Vanessa Dietrich just arrived from Düsseldorf that they heard the news flash.

They were on their way to Dahlem, to Viktor's new and yet unknown apartment where they had thought they would hole up for a time. As Kampfmann and Dietrich were busily whispering to each other in the rear, Viktor and Gabriele were discussing the killings of the previous night.

They had planned it well with Alex, to the second, and it would appear the police had no idea exactly who had done the shooting. The police had of course been informed that it had been the work of the RAF. But the Fraction was estimated to have some four hundred activists and several thousand sympathizers. Viktor, Gabriele, and Alex had not left a clue, and they had moved so quickly it was hardly likely anyone who might have seen them would even remember their faces if shown pictures by the police. Witnesses to sudden violence tend to be blind, confused, inconsistent.

Now there would be waiting time until their next mission with Kampfmann. Waiting time for a terrorist is the worst time—the enforced idleness, the discussions, even the planning of the next action a letdown.

"We've become addicted to action," Viktor said. "It's our fix. Now I know why some of the others take to dope during the intervals." Christa Gruber, Max's wife, had overdosed just a few months ago.

Gabriele would have liked to say, "You are my fix, Viktor," but didn't. Instead she said, "When we were in Hamburg last, how is it you didn't go see Kurt and Ilka?"

"They're getting really old now. Kurt cries easily. Ilka's strong and argues with me, trying to show how evil I've become. And her arguments are stale, boring. As if it's important that the working class is powerful and eats well."

"I commend them, however," Gabriele said, laughing. "They forced another fifteen per cent raise from my father. I miss the bastard. Not Mutti. She must have had her face lifted by now—she's getting on."

The car radio was playing Beethoven's *Cello Sonata in A Major* with Feuermann, and they hummed along. Both were lovers of classical music, and in Paris had gone to concerts almost every day. Rampal and Isaac Stern and Lazar Berman. As she drove, Gabriele kept one hand on Viktor's knee. Now he placed his hand on hers, and they drove on, happy with one another. Old friends, Viktor thought. It's beginning to feel good, very good. I wish I could love her. I love him, she thought, and I know he loves me. He just doesn't know it yet.

She remembered the previous night and his burst of violence, and then hers carried along by his; they had broken through to each other, were at last in tune. It had taken a long time. Perhaps now she would be happy to sleep only with him and no one else. This morning Ahab had given her the eye, had nodded his head in the direction of Molli's bedroom, but she'd pretended not to notice. Usually it was something you had to do when asked by a comrade, otherwise you were bourgeois.

The sonata was suddenly vandalized by a news flash. Just fifteen minutes ago a shootout had taken place between Ahab, Theresa, and Fukado of the Red Army Fraction and the special police in Berlin. Fukado, a Japa-

nese terrorist, had been killed. Ahab and Theresa were in the hands of the police. Two policemen were critically wounded.

The two leaders of the RAF were being held in connection with the murder of Boris Strelsin and Thomas Hayden. The State had declared war on the Red Army Fraction. A police captain had been overheard to say, "First we will shoot, then we will arrest."

Gabriele pulled over to the shoulder of the autobahn. They were all silent for a time, breathing deeply, working at controlling their nerves. The silence was first broken by Vanessa. "Let me out, I have to piss."

As Vanessa, shielded by the car, squatted, Gabriele said, "Plan B goes into effect immediately. Viktor and I will return and stay at Alex's place. You and Vanessa will stay at Max Gruber's. Max will be ecstatic—he hasn't been in action for two months. You will receive word. It shouldn't be but a few days, perhaps a week, the most two."

Molli Wenders, after he heard the news, phoned his friend Helga Maier, his voice in the Judge Helder kidnapping. She arrived in her van after dark. Together, they loaded the van with Wenders' beloved Mollies, his arsenal of guns, a few suits, his Leitz-Ordner, and drove zigzag a dozen blocks to end up at a sympathizer's house, where they unloaded, and Molli went underground.

Alex, the loner, as yet unknown to the police, heard the news in his apartment. He was still a loyal comrade. He waited for the return of Viktor and Gabriele.

In his flat near the Wall, Max Gruber paced back and forth, his pent energy so explosive the walls of his flat could hardly contain him. He had become celebrated in the Group for the brutality he exhibited in his first action, when he, Viktor, Gabriele, and several others had beaten Theresa's ex-husband, Franz Links. He had used glass. Square-headed, square-jawed, he was a short man as wide as he was tall, muscular, so he resembled a block of granite. He had been an entomologist before he joined the revolution. A specialist in anthills. "Marvelous. To be envied." Brown soft eyes, heavy brown eyebrows, square head piled with corkscrew brown curls. Ahab had ordered him on the shelf for two months after he had killed a former comrade when he'd been told only to rough him up. Again he had used glass. He was devoted to the theater, was very well-read, and after Brecht admired most the work of Lillian Hellman, the American playwright and memoirist.

Max Gruber was a vibrant revolutionary. If he had a flaw, it was his over-exuberance with a piece of glass in his hand. A small sin for a terrorist.

Now that Ahab and Theresa had been taken by the police, there would be a call to action. And Vanessa Dietrich would help him forget little Christa who'd overdosed on heroin. Sitting on the shelf had been hell.

Theresa and Ahab had twelve lawyers between them, nearly all of whom were concealed members of the RAF or sympathizers. Young, smart, devoted to the Cause.

Plan B was put into effect.

Theresa and Ahab through their counsel demanded that they be permitted to continue their sociological re-

search—they were collaborating on a book on youth problems for a radical Berlin publisher. The prison library was limited; the university library in Dahlem was required.

The authorities refused to permit them to leave the confines of the prison. The charge, after all, was murder.

In Alex's large apartment (eclectically furnished, a mixture of antique and Italian modern, Oriental rugs) Gabriele and Viktor plotted their campaign. Alex's cover was necessarily blown. He was Peter Alexander Kohler, the son of parents who had been murdered at Dachau. His reparations had been a half million. He now issued a call for war against fascism. He was a pleasant host, generous, unstinting.

Twenty phones were installed, a team of sympathizers recruited to man them. An expensive copier, reams of paper, a small graphic art studio with a graphic artist to go with it, all were acquired in a few days.

"A cottage industry," Gabriele quipped. "I am a Strelsin, though I start small."

She ran it. Quick, efficient, patient, and always with a smile. The ideal entrepreneur.

Leaflets appeared by the tens of thousands. One opened a morning newspaper, there it was. A magazine was flipped through, a leaflet fluttered to the floor. Students, young editors, academics flocked to the Cause.

Gabriele herself called the famous and the near famous of Europe—novelists, literary critics, philosophers, actors, Marxian economists, biologists, Jean-Paul Sartre.

West Germany, she said, is becoming a police state. They are being framed. Police brutality. McCarthyism. All Ahab and Theresa want to do is sociological research.

Civil liberties are being abandoned. The return of Hitler. Ahab and Theresa are the great revolutionaries of our time. Political prisoners held with no shred of evidence. They are not criminals. In any event, Boris Strelsin was a neo-Nazi out of his own mouth, was about to form a paramilitary counter-revolutionary force. She herself was a Strelsin, and she knew.

Many of those Gabriele called declined to issue a statement or lend their name. Many others came to the aid of the imprisoned Theresa and Ahab. Why should they not be permitted to spend their days in the Sociology Institute of the Free University of Dahlem? They would, in any event, be under guard. Revolution is a right guaranteed by law, bourgeois though it may be. They are, one must keep in mind, the heirs of the great Rosa Luxemburg and Karl Liebknecht. Hitler is dead, why revive him? The accused weren't even in Berlin when the alleged assassinations took place.

In Paris, there was a student demonstration before the embassy of the German Federal Republic.

In Rome, the Red Army Brigades pulverized the knee of a West German consular officer.

In Stockholm, a swastika was burned in front of a hotel, one of whose guests was a visiting German professor, a survivor of the camps, a lifelong socialist, and outspoken opponent of terrorism.

The State weakened. Theresa and Ahab were given permission to visit, under guard, the Sociology Institute in Dahlem.

In an apartment newly leased and furnished, an apartment which looked out on the Wall, a few doors from

the flat of Max Gruber, and always under guard, Viktor met with Molli, Alex, Max, Otto, and Haddad, an emissary sent by el-Qaddafi. Because Viktor demanded it, Alex and Haddad politely shook hands, they were comrades-in-arms in the international struggle for liberation. Also in attendance was Helga Maier, Molli's friend, a sympathizer who joined the Cause in the excitement of the time.

She was a slight young woman, with a plain, studious face made beautiful by the torrent of polished chestnut hair which fell about her slender shoulders and back. A librarian, it was she Viktor assigned to do the necessary research. Molli said she had nerves of steel. At night, in the basement of a sympathizer's private house, stone walled and sandbagged, Molli and Alex instructed her in the use of a Heckler & Koch, a small but extraordinarily lethal handgun. Intelligent, deft, steady-handed, she quickly became efficient.

During the day, Helga Maier visited the Sociological Institute to do her research.

Day and night, Viktor plotted the campaign. Without Ahab, he was in complete command—everyone accepted it and soon was happy with it because Viktor had unexpectedly changed. He was suddenly looser, freer than they'd ever seen him. He listened patiently, was warmer to them, smiled more frequently, quipped with them, made them laugh. It was observable even in his body. A man of much beauty, his grace had always seemed incongruous with his straight-backed stiffness. Now the stiffness was gone. He danced, he lolled, his long muscular arms embraced them all.

As Molli told Alex late one night as they tiredly drove

to their underground flat, "Viktor is what's normally called a born leader. And what born leaders have in common is their need to be in total control, that's what drives them to become leaders in the first place—to be in control of the situation, thus of themselves. Take it away, put them second in command, and they are different men, more anxious, less free—they are working too hard to become leaders without even knowing it. That was our old Viktor. Now look at him with Ahab gone. He's become a pleasure to work with; he makes us all want to do our best. Why, for God's sake, we can even say we love him, will do anything for him. Here I am doing something I really don't want to do. He even makes us feel he loves us, too."

"Maybe you ought to tell Gabriele the secret," Alex said with a laugh.

"She already knows. But their difficulty rests in the fact he also knows when one's in love, one is never in complete control of the situation. . . . Do you know that, Alex?"

Alex didn't answer.

The details completed, their assignments choreographed, Viktor had them rehearse it a hundred times, or at least until Max Gruber screamed, "Enough, damn it, enough!"

Viktor smiled. "Yes, enough, Max. But we're like worker ants, our jobs must become imprinted on our chromosomes."

The unruly Max now returned the smile. Max Gruber would have loved nothing more than to be a worker ant in a thriving anthill. His entire life from birth to death

imprinted on his chromosomes—no decisions to make, no problems to solve, no thoughts to think. An ant.

They drank a beer to their success, embraced, shook hands, and said aufwiedersehn.

The May morning was aglow with golden sun, the young buds glistened with dew and the new leaves trembled under a gentle breeze.

At 10:15, under the surveillance of four guards, Theresa and Ahab marched into the reading room of the Sociological Institute.

As the last guard passed the card index files, he was knocked unconscious by Max Gruber using a short leather truncheon. Max, in a business suit and black wig, had been perusing the cards. As the other guards turned to see what had happened, a young woman in a red wig, sitting at a reading table, opened her shoulder bag and withdrew a Heckler & Koch pistol and coolly shot the leading guard. Alex dressed in impeccable banker's gray flannel and homburg, strolled in from an antechamber and killed another. As four policemen standing guard outside the building came in on the run, they were intercepted by Viktor X and Gabriele Rainer, both wearing wigs and dressed in denim coveralls. They had been sitting on a marble bench, shopping bags at their feet. They withdrew Beretta semiautomatics and sprayed bullets at the inrushing guards, all of whom went down. In the reading room, Molli Wenders, who had been standing behind a high stack of books, and holding a Belgian 7.65, exchanged shots with the remaining guard. Alex shot the guard, but one of Molli's bullets hit a librarian, who had fainted, and killed her.

Ahab and Theresa, led by the petite red-wigged Helga Maier, made their escape by jumping out of a side window and speeding off in a stolen white Mercedes driven by I Suck Kampfmann who wore a black English bowler on his head, and at whose side sat Vanessa Dietrich, reading the *Hollywood Reporter*.

Viktor and Gabriele, having killed or wounded four attending guards, covered the entrance of the Institute as Molli, Alex, and Max made their escape out the back window of the reading room. Then guns thrown aside, they calmly left from a side door in the lobby of the Institute. As they drove away in a stolen blue Ferrari, they could hear the police car sirens approaching the Institute of the Free University of Dahlem. Viktor glanced at his wristwatch. "It took us exactly nine minutes," he said. Gabriele patted his hand.

Max Gruber, still in black wig and gray business suit, and in possession of forged papers, passed through a gate of the Wall and happily went to see *A Man's a Man* at the Brecht theater in East Berlin.

As Alex drove Molli and Helga Maier, whom they had picked up at an appointed rendezvous, towards Munich, the American Quaker clutched Alex's homburg in his hands and vomited into it. Helga held a cool hand to Molli's fevered brow and whispered sympathetic words.

"The spiral has spiralled, and now you know how it feels," Alex said laconically. "I'll enjoy reading the neat little entry you ink in your Leitz-Ordner. I wonder, will it be in red?"

"Let him be," Helga said softly, placing a small hand on Alex's thigh while with the other she sympathetically caressed Molli's temple.

Alex smiled to himself.

Molli retched and retched.

Ahab and Theresa, in the apartment of a young couple, sympathizers, couldn't stop grinning as they dyed their hair, changed clothes, and then were driven by the young couple, on holiday, in their van to Freiburg. From there, with forged passports, they made their way to Switzerland, and thence to Italy, where Theresa wanted to spend time with her children.

When the State Police finally gathered their wits together and raided Alex Kohler's apartment, the cottage industry had totally vanished, and with it Alex's expensive furnishings. All they could discover were a blue chambray shirt with a monogram patch and fingerprints of sympathizers.

Late that night, Viktor, Gabriele, Otto, and Vanessa, under the impressive cool of Haddad, were guided onto a private jet liner and flown to Libya, where they were to be the guests of el-Qaddafi, one of the leaders of the world revolution.

Heinz Müller, thirty-one, prison guard, son of a miner and a shopkeeper's daughter, left a wife and two infants. His record indicated he had been a brutal man.

Willy Schmidt, forty-six, prison guard, son of a dockworker and tool and diemaker's daughter, left a wife, three children, a granddaughter. His record indicated he had been fair and decent, had performed his duties routinely.

Karl Leonhardt, twenty-seven, prison guard, son of a railroad yardman and a sanitation worker's daughter, unmarried, left a pregnant womanfriend. His record indicated he had been recently appointed.

Mathilda Schwamm, fifty-nine, librarian, daughter of a shoe worker and piano teacher, left a husband, two children, five grandchildren. Her record indicated she had worked in the Institute library of the Free University for twenty-five years and was due for retirement in one year's time.

Two prison guards were wounded severely but recovered fully. Two others received superficial wounds. One had simply fallen to the floor and played dead.

• . . . Surprise made it easy. . . . •

THE OLD ONES

Clara Z. - a letter

SATURDAY NIGHT AN ENVELOPE CONTAINING SEVERAL closely typed sheets was delivered to the writer at his hotel. A handwritten letter was attached.

Enclosed is my personal account of the final night in the old barracks and my last encounter with Gabriele and Viktor. What came before you already know. I do this to spare myself the anguish of having to repeat it again—not tomorrow morning, as I promised, but next week. I beg you to forgive me. I am much too upset to face you, to reveal my life to you—you who are still a stranger to me. David told you to ask me about Anna Maria Stuhlmann of Hamburg. That is a painful story—one too difficult for me to reveal right now.

I can of course do as Avram does and say nothing further to you—but that is his way, not mine. I promised to give you my oral history, as you call it, and I will. Not only because it will be helpful to you, but it might also be helpful to me. David, dear man, phoned before his plane finally left and gave me freely of his advice. "Get it out in the open once and for all, for crissakes." He is right, of course, though I do wish he hadn't said anything about me to you without asking me first. He believes since he has nothing to hide, no one else should. As I said of him, he is an innocent.

To make it up to you, I will conclude reading the journals of Viktor and Wenders as well as all the other documents bearing on them and send the entire packet to you on Monday or Tuesday. That will mean you won't have lost any time on my account—time which I know is of great importance to you.

If you came tomorrow the faces of Viktor and Gabriele would in any event interfere—his almost expressionless, only the eyes alive, alive with sorrow, pain, anger, feelings he could not conceal no matter how hard he tried. And her intelligent face so classically beautiful but now bruised, embittered by whatever poison it is which tainted her blood. I see their faces so clearly, I can't see my own. Her fine intelligence blighted by an ancient feminine disease—to be conquered by a superior male. Poor woman. Thank God, I never suffered from that illness.

I'm certain they both now live in hell. Heaven they have long ago forfeited. My swinish children. . . . Does that make me a swine as well? Yet once, though for a short time, I breathed the fragrance of heaven—and they did, too, but for a much shorter time.

I go on—you see, I do want to talk. It's just that right now I can't.

Again, forgive me.

Till next Sunday, breakfast.

Clara

THE YOUNG ONES

Viktor and Gabriele

IN HAMBURG, THE DAY AFTER A LAWYER FOR FRANZ Links instituted proceedings in a Roman court for the repatriation of his children, Max Gruber and three members of his cell kidnapped Links. He was found unconscious near the west bank of the Elbe where it runs out to sea.

Links survived.

Max Gruber was learning to discipline his actions, for which he received a letter of commendation, postmarked *Roma,* from Theresa and Ahab, the exiled leaders of the Red Army Fraction.

In Munich, living underground, protected by sympathizers, Helga Maier became the lover of Steve Wenders and Alex Kohler. Both men were satisfied with the ar-

rangement. The slender, plain Helga grew plump and almost beautiful. Her skin became pink and pellucid. Her brown eyes shone. And why not? Both her men were handsome, brave, gentle, with impeccable taste. The three had few if any quarrels. They lived quietly, listened to classical music, talked much. Since Alex had a mordant wit and Molli could be marvelously silly, it was never boring. An idyllic arrangement.

At night, in the basement, under Steve Wenders' instructions, Helga proved adept at making Mollies and other bombs. During the afternoon, when Wenders remained at home to make his neat entries in his Leitz-Ordner, she and Alex went to visit the Pinacothek, the famous Munich art museum, a mere five minute stroll. There, under Alex Kohler's tutelage, for he was a connoisseur, Helga learned to love the art of the past.

They lived in a richly furnished apartment on the third floor of a private house—stone, baroque—the home of a famous restorer, a concealed member of the Red Army Fraction.

Several months after the library escape, Steve Wenders —Alex and Helga had gone for the afternoon—sat at his desk, Leitz-Ordner open before him. He was copying a letter received from Ahmed ben Hussein. It had been posted to a mail drop, the home of an innocent sympathizer, and then hand-delivered to him personally. (He had not shown the letter to his two friends. Their life thus far had been pleasant and peaceful, and he wanted nothing to disrupt it, though he had to admit to himself he was becoming a little itchy for action.) The letter was undated. It was written in a hand as neat and disciplined as his own and in perfect German. Ahmed ben Hussein was Viktor X.

We, Gabriele, Vanessa, Otto, and I, are now in a terrorist camp and have been issued the uniforms of the Fedayeen. We were immediately instructed in the use of explosives and made experimental explosions. (More sophisticated than yours.) After that there were lessons in the manufacture of time bombs. Ours is a struggle which can't be improvised. It requires organized training and discipline, for the professional revolutionary can only be a practitioner in subversion. [And what else is new, buster? SGW]

Every modern weapon is available—even guided missiles. (It has been rumored that el-Qad is willing to finance the making of an atomic bomb. Just think of it! We'll have to recruit a physicist or two from the Planck Institute. The struggle enlarges.)

To paint-smear Jewish memorials with the words *el Fatah* and *Schalom und Napalm* is an action which can no longer be defamed in the Federal Republic as some rightwing radical outburst—it is a decisive link in our international socialist solidarity. Kampfmann, who's an intuitive revolutionary, was right on point. Difficulties in making popular progress along these lines can be attributed to bourgeois Germany's *Judencomplex.* The struggle here makes everything simple. The German working class hasn't joined us (we must face this fact realistically), and we're lost if we don't take up this battle. The Left has not yet begun to understand this. (In your country, Comrade Wenders, the blue-collar class, as you call it, did not join your Cause, and that is primarily why you are in exile.) Why? *Der Judenknax!* A thing about the Jews. In the Federal Republic, we must destroy that thing. On the international front, we must join with our Arab brothers in the destruction of Israel.

I've been wanting to say this outright for a long

time, but didn't have the courage. I've always had a belief that those who abandoned me were Jews on the run from the SS. If that was so, they'll now be repaid. If they were to die, they should have permitted me to die with them. That was my right! [The spiral's out of control. The poor bastard has flipped, gone haywire. SGW]

This will displease Alex, your friend and our comrade—and a very good one, too. The Revolution requires sacrifice. He must make his. He is either with us or against us. As Chamfort wrote: Be my brother—or I will kill you! That is a revolutionary's bedrock law. Not even Nechaiev could have said it better. I relish the line. I cry it out to the entire world: Be my brother—or I will kill you!

Otto, Vanessa, Gabriele, and I have had to make sacrifices, too—have suffered several indignities which I have accepted as necessary, though the others bridle. Those who command the camp abhor our free sexual mores. Vanessa, as is her way, wanted to fuck every man in camp. She became enraged when they ordered her to stop her nocturnal wanderings. (Discipline was becoming shoddy.) Otto laughed at the whole thing. I admonished her and told her she must do as they say. She said I Suck and I have become boring.

Gabriele has refused Otto, and wants me to remain constant with her. She wants more than I can or wish to give her. I'm beginning to believe terrorists should remain celibate so they can devote all their energies to the Cause. Now Vanessa, and very obviously, has begun a campaign to seduce Gabriele, and, strangely enough, Gabriele, who has always detested her, has begun to respond. Also, she's begun to develop an ecxema of sorts on different parts of her body which she constantly

scratches so she's becoming disfigured. Ugly. Ugly and bitter. Spoiled child of the rich, she isn't getting what she wants and is taking it out on herself and everyone else.

I'm afraid the Fedayeen detest us. They became aware that I keep a journal and when I refused to let them see it, they forcibly took it, tore out the pages having to do with our stay here, and countless others having nothing to do with them. They refused to understand that I, like you, want to leave a record of our struggle so that after the Revolution is won the world can learn what it was like to live the life of a terrorist. I have written only the truth, as I'm sure you have. You will preserve this letter for me so when we return I can incorporate it into my journal. (Haddad, who remains a good friend and comrade, and who is more sophisticated than the others here because, as he smilingly puts it using their jargon, he has tasted of the fleshpots of the decadent West, has promised to smuggle this letter out and mail it to you.)

Their patience with us is exhausted and we will soon be on our way home. In any event, we have learned, as you can readily see, a great deal. Pass word to Max Gruber to find me a pad in Hanover, a city where Gabriele and I are unknown. For reasons I can't reveal even to you, I must remain loyal to her. It's very personal and for my Leitz-Ordner, not yours. She's a valiant comrade, tough and unrelenting.

Try to convince Alex of the correctness of the course I have developed. If not—the guillotine!

Fraternally, Ahmed ben Hussein.

[Also known as Viktor X, the Incorruptible. He of all among us has never bought a car; his apartments are the most modest; his clothes and food

the plainest. He is our Saint-Just. Beware the pure and the incorruptible! SGW]

Molli now added his own entry:

• —1. Viktor is correct: the working class has not joined our cause.

—2. If a revolutionary movement does not expand, it must necessarily die.

—3. Viktor is again correct: therefore, we must make an alliance with the international forces of socialism, i.e., el Fatah, PFLO, PLO, el-Qad.

—4. If the Group decides in favor, Alex must come along. As another comrade has put it so well, "The group principle is that there is no entrance fee, but quitting is impossible. That has been made clear to every member—the only way out is via the cemetery."

—5. Alex will not go along. He's as fanatic and pure as Viktor. He joined to kill Nazis, neo-Nazis, and "any man in a German uniform."

—6. I love Alex. And shall remain loyal to him.

—7. I shall also remain loyal to the Group. (Hard truth: should the Group betray me, all bets are off—loyalty is not a divine right, it must be earned.)

—8. As Hemingway and so many others before and after him have said, anyone who says he never feels fear is a goddamned liar. (Ahab is a liar.) But what one is afraid of changes from day to day. Only yesterday Alex said that prison frightens him more than death. (Dieter Paulus said the same thing two hours before he died in a shootout.) I agree. That is why we never forget our guns.

—9. The death wish is a fact.

—10. Be my brother—or I will kill you! That is the end of the spiral.

Conclusion: I am in a swamp. •

Steven Gregory Wenders flipped the pages of his journal backward, found what he sought:

• Mathilda Schwamm, fifty-nine, librarian. I killed her.

If a capitalist is merely the embodiment of his function as an exploiter of labor for the gaining of profit, then Fräu Schwamm was the embodiment of her function as a guardian of the history of man. What was her profit?

What finer function exists?

I, Steven Gregory Wenders, also known as Molli, killed her.

The history of man has been the daily struggle for bread, peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The embodiment of that history has been the revolutionary, sometimes saint, sometimes killer, sometimes both. At first the spiral curled upward slowly, so that saint predominated. As the pace of history quickened the spiral became a whirlwind: Nechaiev. All killer. For bread, peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. An irony—one kills for peace. Since Nechaiev, the function of the revolution has been to kill, hence its embodiment, the revolutionary, is a killer. For bread, peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.

A gun in one's hand gives one power, and as the Prosecutor O'Brien in Orwell's *1984* said, power is not a means, it is an end.

What power do I seek? The power in my puny self to give the world bread, peace, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. No! That's a lie. I seek to elevate myself above my fellow men so that my destiny rests solely in my hands. Control. That's the word I seek. What I can't control, I fear. Fear was Stalin's most concealed secret—the greater his fear, the more he sought total power. Control.

That is what rules the megalomaniacs of the world—their terrible fear, their cowardice in the face of having to share control with their fellow men. And what greater slogan than bread, peace, liberty and the pursuit of happiness with which to shield their cowardice even from themselves?

Only the brave can confess their fear. I am a coward. Caught in the whirlwind—the cruel, wintry winds of Minnesota?—I have been deposited in a swamp and sink into its slime.

For bread, peace, liberty and the pursuit of happiness, I have killed Mathilda Schwamm, fifty-nine, librarian, wife, mother, grandmother, guardian, and disseminator of the history of mankind. And because of her need for my love I have seduced the gentle (how gentle, I wonder?) Helga into joining me in the swamp. Alex is an extremely intelligent, rational man. Yet his overwhelming anger (and anguish) at those who murdered his mother and father has led him to kill even the innocent.

—I love Helga and I love Alex.

—Alex loves Helga and he loves me.

—Helga loves Alex and she loves me.

—We give each other surcease. That is not a little thing. •

Steve Wenders closed his Leitz-Ordner, placed it in his drawer, and went in to shower and dress. Despite his pock-marked face he was a handsome man. "The scars give me a virility I would not otherwise possess," he always said. From his replenished wardrobe he withdrew a fine Italian silk suit, a shirt made of Egyptian cotton, and lisle socks. He, like Alex, enjoyed the pleasures of dressing up. They were going to a party given by uninvolved comrades that evening, and as he dressed he already could feel, in anticipation, the exquisite warmth of Helga as she strolled arm-in-arm between Alex and himself. Also the pleasure at the awe with which they would be regarded by the others. Folk heroes, that's what they were. The guns they always carried gave them a stature larger than life.

Later, on their way to the party, Alex, silver-headed cane in hand, took it into his head to begin walking like Charlie Chaplin. Soon the three of them were doing it in unison, laughing all the way.

Four hours later, as Alex Kohler and Helga Maier left the apartment house, Steve Wenders slowly following behind—all a little high on pot and schnapps—three GSG–9 special police with dogs approached them. One of the policemen held a crumpled blue chambray shirt with the monogram PAK embroidered over its pocket. As the dogs strained their leashes to get at Alex, he pushed Helga back and drew his gun. The police shot him. As he went down, Helga, who had already drawn her Heckler & Koch, shot one of the special agents, and was herself gunned down. Molli, as he came on the run, shot another policeman. As the third, still holding the barking dogs, set up an alarm on his walkie-talkie, Molli ducked into the alley and entered the building through the rear of a ground floor apartment. A young man and woman sat at the kitchen table drinking beer, a dachshund sleeping at their feet.

Pointing his gun, Wenders ordered the man to undress, then tied him and the woman to their chairs with towels, first gagging them. As he exchanged his clothes for the man's, he could hear the GSG–9 security police with their dogs beginning to make a house-to-house search for him.

Calmly, he wiped his gun clean of prints, threw it out a back window, pulled the man's cap over his own ears, leashed the dachshund, and leading the animal, sauntered out the front door and into the street. He led the dog directly towards several policemen, nodding to them as he approached. They let him through without a word.

• —In time of crisis, do not think, merely take the most simple, direct action. I did not think for a week, at which point I was already in Hanover waiting for Gabriele and

Viktor. I merely stared into space. Neither ate nor drank nor slept. Not a thought. All I saw were Helga and Alex, one atop the other, in stop-frame—Helga and Alex, one atop the other—in black and white except for a trickle of red blood. And the police dogs never stopped barking. . . . •

WHEN STEVE WENDERS SAW VIKTOR X AND GABRIELE Rainer for the first time upon their return to the Federal Republic, he thought that perhaps Alex and Helga were better off dead compared to them.

Though burned almost black from the sun, blond hair white, Viktor looked ill. His eyes were sunk deep in their sockets and gleamed with the intensity of the desert sun. He'd lost much weight and his movements were stilted, stiff. He spoke quickly and only in revolutionary jargon. He seemed to have only contempt for Gabriele, and could barely look at her when she was in the room. Molli had heard that the desert could do this to people, but hadn't really believed it. Or was it something else, was it the maniacal love affair between Viktor and Gabriele?

As for Gabriele, he himself could barely stand to look at her. One of the most beautiful women he'd ever known, she was now a caricature. Hair also white from the sun, eyes also lost in the hollows of her eyesockets, she was as thin as a stick, her former peachlike complexion now blotchy, red, white, tan.

No sooner did they say hello than she said, "You don't have to say anything. I know I'm a wreck. I need action, any action. That place was a hellhole. And boring, my God! Find us something to do, and quickly."

"Ignore her," Viktor said. "She seems to think her personal feelings are more important than the objective needs of the Cause."

"You and your fucking Cause. You're a eunuch. Even Vanessa's got more balls than you. And Otto with his soft cock. . . ." She stomped out to their bedroom to unpack as Viktor raised his sun-whitened eyebrows and turned his back on her.

Molli, burdened with his own despair, put on his hat and coat—it was early fall—and left for his flat down the street.

As the days passed, and they waited for the call to action, Gabriele and Viktor, now wholly underground, spent as much time quarreling as not speaking to one another. Gabriele kept herself occupied reading, staring at the wall, listening to music. Viktor wrote in his journal, now for the first time in many months.

• I'll leave the writing of those events between Gabriele's foolish and sentimental entry and those following to this day to the historians. Historians are necessarily clerks, and clerks are pettifoggers, who, like novelists, try to persuade with lies. A gun in the hand of a terrorist tells the truth. A bullet speeding to its human target brooks no lie. The enemy, man or woman, is dead. That is truth.

The Russian nihilists and anarchists of the nineteenth century who believed that the taking of a life, even of an enemy, must be paid for with a life were romantic sentimentalists. They believed in good and evil. There is no good, only evil. It is the object of the Revolution to destroy that evil. Only then will we know what good is.

Gabriele alternates whipping me with obscenities (which I myself have now given up using, since their utterance is merely a symptom of infantile rage) and comforting me with

psychological pronouncements. She is after all Fräulein Doktor Strelsin, as I am Herr Doktor Frankel—bourgeois words of class distinction which we gave up long ago. She reminds me that early on in our friendship she already knew I was an autodidact who concealed his subjective anxieties with abstract generalities, and it is that which has driven me to celibacy and not my great idealism.

I put it differently. The contradiction between my sexual desire and my inability to love created an anxiety which was destroying my revolutionary zeal—created, so to speak, forks in the road. I must travel a one-way road, otherwise I cannot travel at all.

Steve Wenders mourns the death of Helga Maier and Alex Kohler. I told him he loved them too much, that terrorists must not love even a little, for he has lost his effectiveness. It is only in Amerika that one can still think of giving up everything for love. He is so despondent, he didn't even answer. He looks bleak, has lost his usual dapper appearance. When he does speak, he frequently mentions his homeland, the city where he was born, his parents—all of which no doubt indicate a debilitating homesickness. I felt it necessary to remind him that if he returned to Amerika he would find the FBI awaiting him. He denied any desire to return. To rouse him, I told him as far as Alex is concerned, it is better he died in the shootout with the GSG–9, for now he's a martyr. Because of the new course we're to embark upon, Alex would necessarily have become a traitor and we'd have had to shoot him.

Molli said, "If he had turned against us, I'd have stood with him." (Now that Alex is dead, it's easy for Molli to say that.)

"Which proves," I said, "that terrorists shouldn't love."

Since he's an honest man, he didn't disagree.

As for Helga, I said, "Too bad, I believe she had the ability to become an extraordinary proficient urban guerrilla. She had a real passion for violence."

For the first time since our return, Molli smiled. "Yes," he said, "I saw it, too."

I didn't touch further on his personal affair with Helga and Alex, since that is entirely irrelevant.

I've asked Gabriele to go to a physician about her ecxema, but she refuses, saying it is only a reaction to the African sun and now that we are in the temperate climate of West Germany it will go away, adding, "What I really need is a little action. That'll cure me for sure."

I reminded her that Molli and we were going to West Berlin where together with Otto, Vanessa, and many other comrades from Max Gruber's group we were planning to bomb the Jewish Center on Fasanenstrasse on the anniversary of *Kristallnacht.* Though it was a year later than we had planned, we had not forgotten.

"That'll be a pleasure," she said, "but I wasn't thinking of that type of action."

I knew exactly what she meant, but I said, "What do you mean?"

She'd been standing across the room, but now she strode towards me and as she approached I could see more clearly the ugly blotches on her thin face and I found it difficult to avert my eyes—the beautiful, golden Gabriele. When she stood before me, she yanked her belt from her pants and began to lash me. I grabbed it, pulled it out of her hands, and threw her on the sofa.

"Oh, that type of action?" I said. "I thought Vanessa kept you satisfied."

"You're jealous of Vanessa, aren't you?"

"Of course not."

"Of course not!" she mimicked, knowing full well it infuriates me, and hoping I'd lose my temper. I didn't, of course. Why should I give her that satisfaction? "You're lying, you're lying," she screamed, lifted herself from the sofa and ran from the room.

As I write this, I have a terrible urge to cry. Why, I don't know. No, no, I'm lying, I do know.

When Gabriele slept with other men, I was never jealous. Yet when she and Vanessa began to sleep together at the

terrorist camp fury blinded me despite myself. It was a fury with which I wasn't familiar and I didn't know what to do with it. When I first found out, I struck her so hard she fell to the ground. Gabriele's not a coward, and for a woman is very strong. Those years on the snow slopes and reining in thoroughbred horses with strong heads made her body resilient and her hands tough. She leaped to her feet and tore into me. We fought then, fought like two wild dogs. Judge Helder was right—we *are* wild dogs.

It aroused us sexually and before we knew it we were tearing off our clothes and screwing like dogs. The fight was heard all over camp, and we were admonished by the Commandant. (His contempt overflowed.) I told Gabriele I would never touch her again. Fine, she said, and resumed with Vanessa, and then told me all about it. With the same result. However, we were more discreet, we fought silently, behind clenched teeth. It became a habit, an addiction—the violent brawl, followed by hard brutal screwing.

And something else happened, something beyond my control: I began to love Gabriele.

She had finally scaled the walls of my reserve and penetrated into my heart.

I wanted to be with her night and day, made every effort to prevent her being with Vanessa, whom I now loathed. I had fantasies about our running away together, giving up the Revolution. Daydreamed about our holiday in Paris, enlarged on it, romanticized it, made it into some sort of mythological stay in Paradise, just her and me in an Edenic world, with Bach fugues as background music, flowers, beauty, laughter.

It frightened me—as Gabriele said it, scared the shit out of me. I decided then to become celibate.

Love? For me? For Viktor X?

My revolutionary will reasserted itself.

I refused to touch her. With me, it had to be all or nothing, I suppose.

She began again to sleep with Vanessa, making sure I would catch them at it.

I turned my head aside.

No matter how much she taunts me, sneers at me, curses me, I remain calm, hard.

And she?

She becomes ugly.

Yet, we are tied to one another, as tied as the Earth is to the Sun. And she is the Sun, and I the Earth. I rotate around her. If one dies, the other dies. Some call that love. I don't have a name for it. It's a fact which she accepts and which I accept, like it or not.

She's tortured by it.

I remain chaste.

Tomorrow night is *Kristallnacht* II, almost forty years after the first, when the Nazi swine burned synagogues, smashed the windows of Jewish establishments throughout Germany, assaulted Jews, young and old, began to send many of them to camps. It was the act of an irrational mob spurred on by irrational leaders motivated by irrational reasons: race hatred, the idea of pure blood, so-called Aryan superiority, and much other nonsense.

We are not motivated by hatred of the Jews as a people, by a belief in the purity of blood, but by the revolutionary need to forge a decisive link in our international socialist solidarity with the Arab revolution against the servants of Amerikan imperialism: the Jewish State. By paint-smearing Jewish memorials to the destruction of millions of Jews, and bombing the rebuilt Jewish Center we will prove our *bona fide* to our Arab comrades. In addition, it will further our aim of creating chaos in the liberal bourgeois swamp—and what better way than by doing the unthinkable? When the Revolution is won, Jews will benefit as much as all other people, so what if they now suffer these indignities—it is small payment for the coming victory.

I have to confess to a hesitancy on my part, to an unease, and for that reason I'm doubly unhappy that I won't be an active participant in *Kristallnacht* II. I plotted it, but as I

write this I'm in bed with a viral influenza: high fever, diarrhea, enervation, under the care of a physician and an uninvolved comrade who's volunteered to look after me until Gabriele and Molli (though reluctant he is going "only because I am itchy for action") return from Berlin, where they've gone to join Otto and the others, taking with them the bedouin garments we brought with us from the terrorist camp. Now that they're going to participate in a militant action, both have become enspirited and Gabriele's ecxema begins to show signs of clearing up. How elated they were (yes, Molli, too) in anticipation of at last doing something after our enforced idleness.

It's difficult to admit, but I'm distraught with the image of Gabriele and Vanessa entwined in each other's arms, for Vanessa'll be there, and after the act of vandalism is done there will be the usual elation and what follows. The image is persistent, and even when I sleep I see them both naked in bed, caressing one another, drinking from one another, their nipples taut, lips swollen and enflamed, whispering, laughing, crying out. It makes me more ill than I already am, my God! what has Gabriele done to me? She's discovered my weakness, and ruthless terrorist that she is, she is unrelenting. It's an agony which destroys me. How I yearn for those days when I could feel little and loved no one. I can feel her golden skin, her supple thighs tight around my waist, taste her glorious breast as I fill my mouth with it, cry out with her as our passion becomes violent, our lips sore with kissing, pressing closer, closer, until I am she and she is I, and we are Gabrieleviktor. I keep telling myself it's my fever, my illness, but I know that's untrue. I love Gabriele. I love her. There, I have said it. I shout it! I love Gabriele!

And in our violence we'll destroy each other—that's as obvious as one times one is one.

Tonight is *Kristallnacht* II and all I think about is Gabriele. My fever's down, but my desire for her overwhelms me. I've sent the attending comrade away. I want to enjoy

my agony alone. It will only leave me after she has returned. I hope, I pray, that her ecxema is so bad that Vanessa will turn away from her. I hate her! Vanessa, that is. Gabriele, too!

Kristallnacht II is history.

What a storm! They scream in frustration. What will we do next, they ask. The Federal Republic blushes with shame.

The newspapers, radio and television are filled with it. They call us Nazis, Stalinists, Anarchists, barbarians—they don't know what to call us. I'll send them a note, I'll tell them. We are Kommandos of Chaos! We are the New Revolution! We are the Sons and Daughters of Nechaiev! We will destroy them!

Hamburg, Essen, Frankfurt, Munich, Düsseldorf, Stuttgart, West Berlin paint-smeared EL FATAH, PFLO, PLO, SCHALOM UND NAPALM, DEATH TO IMPERIALISTS, LONG LIVE THE REVOLUTION! The rebuilt Jewish Center bombed by urban guerrillas dressed in the graceful robes of our Arab comrades.

Perfectly executed. Not one of our comrades recognized or apprehended by the police. No bystanders hurt in any way. (I had given Otto Kampfmann and Gruber explicit orders about that. "We don't want any Jews hurt physically. That's not our purpose now." Otto had raised an eyebrow, grinned, and gone into his jig.)

It all took place simultaneously in the above cities. It was done in precisely forty-five minutes. Bourgeois manners are today a shambles in the Federal Republic. The Jewish thing is now in the open.

My fever's disappeared, my digestive system is in perfect order. I shit bombs. Ho, ho, I do a Kampfmann jig.

Up and about for the first time in four days, I shower and shave, apply scented aftershave lotion, dress in my Paris clothes, spend fifteen minutes combing and brushing my unruly mop.

I wait for Gabriele.

For two days and nights I waited for Gabriele to return, neither eating nor sleeping. Bitch! I tore the clothes from my back. Ran like a madman to the door every time I heard a sound outside. No Gabriele. Not a word. Nothing. Images of her and Vanessa refused to leave my brain. I cursed. I ranted. The images grew. Gabriele and Kampfmann, Gabriele and Max Gruber, Gabriele and Molli, Gabriele and Vanessa again, Gabriele and all four. Gabriele, Gabriele. Kissing another, taking a cock in her mouth, a tit, on all fours, taking it in her ass. Gabriele! I screamed. Tore at the skin of my face. Pounded my head with my fists. There was no end to it. I wanted to run into the city, no destination in mind, just to run wildly. Only one sliver of rationality restrained me. The GSG–9 hovered in the streets with their dogs. What it was that led me there, I don't know, but I found myself in Gabriele's closet, the door closed behind me, her clothes in a heap about my head as I huddled in a corner. I smelled her scent, her sweat. I became hot, fetid. I bundled her clothes and held her in my arms, embraced her, kissed her, smelled her. The intense heat, the close stink, the sparsity of air combined to slow the beat of blood in my temples, my heart slowed down, I fell asleep. The sweet sleep of death. No images, no dreams. Death.

It was there Gabriele found me.

Whispering words of sympathy, of love even, she pulled me to my feet, and half carrying me led me to the bed. The flat looked as if it had had a visitation by the Vandals, chairs, tables overturned, smashed dishes strewn across the floors.

As I lay supine, she undressed me, then bathed my body with warm water and soap, rubbed me down with alcohol, combed the hair out of my eyes, even shaved me.

I was finally able to see her clearly. Her face was pallid, but not a blemish, smooth as cream. My eyes searched hers. She lowered them. "Please look at me," I whispered.

The cold of the blue belied the crimson warmth of her lips. Gabriele can't lie, as I can't lie. Except to ourselves, of course. Aren't we human?

"I love you," she said softly, "but I'm not a nun."

I could barely get the words out. "With all of them?"

She couldn't resist smiling, then patted my cheek as if I were a child. "Don't be foolish," she said. "One of Gruber's friends. Nothing much."

I drew her towards me, and with her lovely head nested in the hollow of my shoulder, we rested without words until I fell asleep.

Hours later when I awoke the flat was in order, the rooms were filled with the mathematical magic of a Bach piano *partita,* and I wondered at the madness which had overcome me. Why couldn't she and I live this way always? What drove us? Why couldn't we escape? Why think about it? Gabriele was with me. Accept that before you drown in a miasma of sentimentality.

We spoke little. Ate, dressed in our Parisian clothes, disguised by wigs we went to see a French film, inconsequential.

Upon our return, we undressed without a sound. It was as if we'd been struck mute. Perhaps we both thought if we stopped our mouths from speaking words, our brains would stop thinking as well.

She was satisfied to lie in my arms for many hours. Once or twice she whispered that I was breaking her rib cage. We laughed until I began to caress her, then quietly, softly, we made tender love.

"It's possible, you see, it's possible," she whispered before she fell asleep.

Later she again cried out for her father, something she hadn't done for many months.

I held her closely, soothed her, and then myself had my old dream: the frightful whistle of falling bombs, intense heat, hot flesh, the odor of feces and vomit. I forced myself to wake. I padded about the dark flat with my eyes closed like a sleepwalker's.

I tried to make plans for a revolutionary act, but my mind wouldn't function. Ahab and Theresa, who have returned to

the Federal Republic with her children, have sent urgent messages. Max Gruber and Molli who had joined his cell (for Molli the spiral has quickened: like his beloved Alex he wants to shoot at every uniform in sight) have come up with a plan for a raid on an Amerikan installation in the Saarland to kidnap atomic detonators, a plan which if successful would make the leaders of the West do the cancan stark naked in the United Nations Plaza in New York at our bidding. Still, I dally—we dally, Gabriele and I.

We are in love. Obsessed with love as before we were obsessed with the Revolution. She has regained her weight, her skin is the color of a gold peach, she dances, she sings, her eyes clear blue like a cloudless sky, she smiles, we speak kindly to each other, we touch.

We eat, we loll, we make love. We shower, we listen to music, we make love. We dress, we nibble on a piece of bread and butter, we make love. We disguise ourselves and go to the movies, we make love. We sleep, we make love. We awake, we make love. We make love. We make love.

"We're enslaved," Gabriele says with a smile.

"Yes," I say, "we're enslaved."

"Let's run away," she says.

"Yes," I say, "but where to?"

"To the French Riviera," she says.

"Your father's there," I say.

"To the South Pole," she says.

"The penguins will inform on us," I say.

"To Tahiti," she says.

"We'll get leprosy," I say.

"We'll die together," she says.

We make love, and die together.

"I'm afraid," I say.

"Of what?" she says.

"Of love," I say.

"That I, the all-consuming female, will devour you?" she says with a smile.

"No," I say. "That I will be consumed in the flames."

Gabriele rises from the bed and as I observe her miraculous uptilted behind winking at me she runs to the kitchen and shortly returns with a pot of cold water with which she drenches me and the bed.

I throw a pillow at her.

She laughs and leaps on me.

We wrestle, we roar like lions, we make love.

Rolled up in the blanket, sealed top and bottom, merged so that we are one, we sleep in our cocoon.

Molli Wenders arrived yesterday, a changed Molli, his eyes no longer pensive, but hard, relentless, searching. He was very lean, and the old acne scars on his face were the color of frozen lead.

There were no amenities as he reminded us of the conversation I'd had with him after Alex and Helga had been killed by the GSG–9.

"We're in love," Gabriele said.

"Obsessively," I said.

"That's irrelevant," he reminded me. "Be my brother—or I will kill you," dear old Molli said, his voice cold, grating. Then, his disguise adjusted, his coat collar up, for it was snowing, he left without another word being said. (I don't believe this forced hardness of his—it's not natural to him.)

We shrugged, sat at the table opposite each other, couldn't eat, merely stared tenderly into each other's eyes.

"You're a terribly beautiful man," she said.

"And you make Botticelli's *Spring* look like an old hag."

That was yesterday. This morning we decided we'd better send an uninvolved comrade with a message to Theresa in West Berlin where she and Ahab live underground, informing her that we weren't enemies, we weren't against, that soon we'd be ready to resume our duties to the Revolution.

After our messenger left, Gabriele and I sat on the sofa, holding hands, saying nothing.

She broke the silence first.

"I wish Molli'd been shot before he got here." She was

just talking, of course, something to relieve the tension brought on by Molli's visit.

"Me, too," I said, and grabbed her.

Our laughter was forced.

We tried very hard to forget Molli's visit, to forget the Revolution—what a pretentious word it suddenly seemed. But it was present now, staring at us with eyes as implacable as that of a death's-head.

Our laughter became strident, our voices raucous, as I say, we tried very hard.

When we went to sleep, we found no comfort in each other's arms. Again, to make us forget, we forced it, became brutal.

The delicate idyll was shattered.

Gabriele cried, finally fell asleep.

As I write this, my eyes see through splintered glass.

We are as we were before.

It took several days.

Like two gladiators, we clashed, each trying to bring the other down. The battle a stalemate, we embraced. Rested, then resumed on the morrow. Wounded, scarred, another stalemate, another embrace.

"No!" I shout. "No more!"

She, as fatigued, as shattered, concedes. "At last I understand," she says. "Not only you, but myself. We hate more than we love. To escape, we would have to take the vows. You a monk, me a nun." Then she laughs bitterly.

Hating ourselves and one another, tied to one another, we escape by leaving Hanover behind and going to join our comrades. •

• TERRORISM IS THE WEAPON OF THE POOR, SARTRE HAS said. Another one of his foolish ad libs. Terrorism is the weapon of those who hate. I hate. Gabriele hates. Ahab hates. Theresa hates. Max Gruber hates. Georg von Rauch hated, as did Alex. I Suck hates, clown that he is. Vanessa hates, herself most of all. Steve Wenders doesn't hate enough. Linz, Theresa's former husband, is confused. He revealed naked women in his centerfold. Was that out of love or hate? •

Viktor X and Steve Wenders robbed a bank in Bielefeld, killing a guard.

Gabriele and Max Gruber bombed the courthouse in Stuttgart.

As comrades of Kommune II firebombed a pier at the harbor as a diversion, Otto Kampfmann and Vanessa Dietrich hauled a circus cage in which pranced three monkeys dressed in top hat and tails to the front lawn of the Hamburg Hall of Justice. On the cage hung a placard: The Satrapy of Imperialism.

Heinz Dolger, a newly recruited comrade, burned Solzhenitsyn in effigy on the campus of the Free University in Dahlem.

Theresa issued a proclamation calling for a Total Solution—the liquidation of all enemies of the Revolution.

Ahab issued another calling for Twenty-four Hours of HATE Each Day and Every Day.

Horst Graumann and three comrades of the June 2nd Group were shot and killed by the Munich police as they left the scene of a bank robbery.

The following day, Berlin's Chief Justice was dragged from his daughter's birthday party and shot.

A mistake, Ahab said. He should have been hung.

"For seventy-two hours," a television editor stated, "we just lost control of the medium. It was theirs, not ours. . . . We shifted shows in order to meet their timetable."

Viktor X, Gabriele Rainer, Manfred Graumann, the brother of Horst, and Steve Wenders raided an army installation in Lebach, the Saarland. They loaded a van with hand grenades, automatic rifles, submachine guns, ammunition, and fled. They had hoped to find atomic detonators, but failed in their search.

The headlines the following morning indicated that four soldiers had been killed. No one apprehended.

On page twelve an item noted that fortunately atomic detonators which had been stored in the raided army storehouse had been removed but three days before.

Two days later, an anonymous caller, someone who'd read page twelve, dialed 110 and informed GSG–9 of the whereabouts of Ahab, Theresa, Manfred Graumann, and Friedrich Goff, the alleged killer of the Berlin Chief Justice.

Without using dogs, walkie-talkies and sirens, the police raids were successful, not one shot being exchanged. The four terrorists were imprisoned in the security prison at Stuttgart-Stammheim.

Twenty-four hours later, two comrades were picked up in Kiel—also on a telephone tip from an unknown source —and sped to Stammheim prison.

In Hanover, within seventy-two hours, Steve Wenders and Gabriele Rainer knocked on the door of Rolf König, a car mechanic recently recruited by the June 2nd Group, the first working man to have joined the Revolution, and asked him to take a stroll with them to discuss a mission.

His thin body was found the next morning leaning against a tree, around his bony neck the verdict: A Traitor.

Max Gruber fled the country and it was rumored he was in a terrorist camp in Libya.

Steve Wenders disappeared.

Otto Kampfmann and Vanessa Dietrich were arrested as they motored to Elbchaussee-Hamburg from West Berlin. The charge: kidnapping, accessory to murder. They were released on bail. However, I Suck's Rolls Royce was confiscated. The charge: faulty registration.

Gabriele Rainer and Viktor X hid in Munich in the home of the famous art restorer where Steve Wenders had once resided with Helga Maier and Alex Kohler.

The terrorists imprisoned in Stammheim were represented by eighteen lawyers, most of them concealed comrades, and all of them adept at exploiting the laws of the State. Collectively, the prisoners issued a call for justice to all lovers of freedom and democracy.

Jean-Paul Sartre flew to West Germany and was permitted by the authorities to interview Ahab and Theresa, the leaders of the Red Army Fraction.

Not putschists, as he had feared, but martyr-figures of the Left International whom he alleged had been tortured. He appealed to all, revolutionaries and non-revolutionaries, to rally to their defence.

With a young vicar at his side, the Protestant Bishop of Berlin called on Theresa, the pastor's daughter, to give her his blessing.

When the two theologians departed, the younger had in his pocket a message from Ahab to Viktor X.

An uninvolved comrade hand-delivered it.

The message contained but two words: Plan Israel.

Both carrying forged passports and wearing disguises, Viktor X and Gabriele Rainer turned up in Athens, where they soon were joined by Max Gruber and Haddad, their Arab friend and comrade.

As Viktor and Gabriele settled down in their hotel room in the Plaka, she said, "This time, Viktor, don't come down with the flu!"

Viktor struck her so hard on the mouth, her lip split.

THE OLD ONES

Clara Z.-
a long and uneventful life

On Sunday morning, when the worn briefcase stuffed with journals and documents was returned to Clara, she took a hard look at the writer, then smiled grimly. "Now, like Gabriele and Viktor, you also know the meaning of love and terror, don't you?" Viktor had been right—she had extraordinary eyes—a penetrating blue from which one could not hide. In answer to the writer's mumbled response, she said, "I hope you've been able to catch some sleep. . . . Come, let's have some breakfast, and get immediately to work."

She looked refreshed and at ease with herself, like all of Haifa that morning, awash with a clean Mediterranean blue-gold light. She wore a soft blue cotton sleeveless dress, belted at her slender waist by a narrow strip of gold

leather. Her gray-gold hair was brushed tightly back and fell to her back in a loose plait held together by a thin blue ribbon. Again her tanned legs were stockingless, but this time she wore leather sandals.

Later, at her desk in the study, the sun from the window close by revealed that under a light dusting of powder her eyelids were red.

She switched on the recorder herself, then settled back and, fully in command, began her history, swiftly and without false modesty.

"I am sixty years old. I live alone—prefer it that way. I have not permitted a man to touch me for more than thirty years. Not because I dislike men—I like them very much—but because of a conscious decision I made and for reasons you will shortly understand, that I hope you will understand." Her smile cut the hard edge.

"I work full-time as consultant to the Harbor Master of the Port of Haifa. I earn my pay."

She was born in the Warsaw ghetto of Jewish working-class parents. "Poor—very poor." She had two brothers and a sister, all older than she. Her sister died in the Warsaw uprising against the Nazis. "I was told she died with a gun in her hand. Of that I am very proud." The rest of her family was exterminated in Treblinka.

Her quick intelligence and gift for languages earned her a scholarship to the local gymnasium and then to the Sorbonne in Paris. At fifteen, still in the gymnasium, she joined the Young Communist League. "For the usual reasons," she said, "a desire to alleviate poverty, a repugnance for social injustice, a reaction to anti-Semitism, and to become a part of the world revolution led by Joseph Stalin and the Bolsheviki, who had literally stopped the

planet in its spin and reversed its rotation. I was all for it." In France, she did political work for the Party among Polish working-class nationals living in and around Paris.

After the formation of the International Brigades under the leadership of André Marty, the Party asked her to leave the university and go to Loyal Spain as a nurse. Clara was happy to do so. She worked in numerous Inter-Brigade hospitals—Albacete, Murcia, Benacasim above Alicante, Sitges.

Political commissars, soldiers, doctors loved her. She was neither profligate nor miserly with her affections, but it was with Anton, political commissar of the Dombrovskis, that she fell in love. "He was a good comrade, celebrated as a brave soldier at the front, and in the past in the Polish underground, and yet like a shy boy with a woman, almost as if he were afraid. He wasn't cold, merely chilled. He took the loss of a leg with uncommon grace. I wanted to warm him, to let him suckle from my breast. I fell in love with him and he with me. He became a passionate lover." She smiled. "I didn't have to become, I already was, had been since sixteen. I loved men and I loved sex."

When, at Party orders, Anton left Sitges, Clara felt no resentment . . . "Well, perhaps a little, it was natural that I should, but I accepted it as necessary. He had to do what was necessary, and I also. What was our separation compared to the destruction of life then taking place in Spain and what we were certain was soon to follow in the rest of the world?"

In Sitges she worked day and night nursing and comforting the dying and the wounded, helping to evacuate as many as possible while Franco's armies marched to the sea. "I caressed tortured, maimed flesh for so long, I lost

the capacity to cry." She was among the last, and then it was too late. The borders were sealed. "I was now an enemy in an enemy country." She neither wept nor wrung her hands.

Dressed in the skirt and blouse of a peasant, she lived among Catalans. "I was blessed. Language comes as easily to me as breathing. I have perfect pitch. What I hear I can reproduce with my voice box, my tongue, my lips. Without thinking, I can speak Yiddish, Polish, Russian, French, German, Spanish, Catalan, yes, and English. And Hebrew now," she laughed, "like a native. What I find difficult is changing my habits of thought—unlearning rather than learning the belief in the necessary lie, the necessary deception, the necessary murder—the phrase the young Auden used when he accepted the Soviet purges. (He, fortunately, had the necessary courage to unlearn and became a wise man.) I still find it difficult to unlearn the necessary atrocities committed in the name of History, of the Revolution, of Nationhood. A universal disease. A plague. . . ."

Slowly—it took months—Clara, sometimes alone, at other times with companions, worked her way north through Catalonia to the Pyrenees. She begged food, stole food, was given food. She slept in barns, in bombed-out houses, with her back against a wall in an alley. It was spring; the weather was spun gold; the sun sustained her. Once late at night she was confronted by a Civil Guard. Taking no chances, she courted him with a smile, with her full breasts, her round thighs. "I got the better of the bargain. I raised my skirt, he inserted his sex into a half-dead body for a few seconds. I came away with a lifetime."

At the foothills of the Pyrenees near Figueras, she met a young Andaluz also on the run, heading for France. He knew of a little known path through the mountains and together they pushed high into the Pyrenees and then into France. It took many days. "You won't believe me, but we passed the time arguing politics. He was an Anarchist and I a Communist. Mortal enemies, we enraged each other. (It made the time pass quickly.) He kept repeating he ought to kill me in retribution for the many Anarchists we had slandered and killed. He was right, of course, and I, of course, thought it had all been necessary. He used the word *compañeros,* not comrades. In Spain only the Communists and Falangists used the word comrade. Till today. A true historical coincidence. Brothers. I informed him I would be happy to kill him, too, but it was more necessary I reach France, there would be much Party work to do, and I could not accomplish my purpose without him.

"Sometimes we climbed endlessly without speaking. We hated each other. But at night we slept in each other's arms. I did not convince him and he did not convince me, but I did learn to speak the Andaluz dialect." Her laugh tolled like a church bell.

"As I say, it took us many days. But he had had the good sense to steal several loaves of hard Spanish bread and he was a marvel at catching fish in a mountain stream or tarn. He knew which mushrooms were poisonous and which edible. I would have perished without him. At last one night we reached a French border marker. It was agreed it would be best to descend into France during the following day.

"No, we didn't discuss politics that night—what we did

do was gambol about like two mountain deer, playing tag, dancing, laughing, singing, making love the whole night through. The despair which was Spain was behind us. His name was Antonito. He was nineteen years old and had fought in the lines for two and a half years. He came from a town in the mountains above Granada, and had witnessed one night in August, a month after the Franco rebellion began, the murder of thousands of Republicans and Socialists in the town's cemetery. He had been hidden in the bushes above the cemetery and watched and watched and watched. Heaps and heaps and heaps of bodies. Machine gun belt after machine gun belt after machine gun belt. He wanted to run away, to scream, but forced himself to stay and stuffed his mouth with the end of his blanket. It was the night the great Lorca was killed. Before the sun rose he broke himself loose, returned to his *caseta,* told his father and mother, and with his brother went in search of Anarchist militia to join. His brother died in the losing battle of Málaga. I believed him when he boasted that he himself had fought bravely and killed many fascists. I will love him to the day I die."

In the Nariege, at the railroad terminal of a small town called Ax, they separated. Plastered to Clara's back was a slender packet containing her French residence permit as a Sorbonne student and two five hundred franc notes. "I've been stupid in my life, but I was never a fool."

Before boarding a train for Paris, she gave Antonito one of the five hundred franc notes. He went to the authorities who would send him to join other Spanish refugees near Perpignan. As they parted, Antonito raised his left fist in the Anarchist salute, and Clara the right. Then

they smiled and kissed in the formal European fashion.

A few years later, World War II into its second year, Antonito slipped back into Spain, where he joined the Anarchist underground. No sham revolutionary, he fought against tyranny for ten years, living the life of a hunted beast. Cornered at last by a patrol of Civil Guards on a crowded street in Lérida, though armed he refused to shoot for fear of killing innocent people. They had no such inhibition. He was killed, his gun still cold in his hand.

Before boarding the train for Paris, Clara bought a copy of *l'Humanité,* the French Communist newspaper. As the train left the terminal of Ax, she unfolded the paper—she had much to catch up with. For the first time she learned of the Stalin-Hitler pact. And for the first time since she'd been a child, she cried.

The following morning, *l'Humanité* folded neatly under her arm, Clara disembarked in Paris, convinced by all the great names in her newspaper that what Stalin had done was necessary.

The Polish workers in and around Paris among whom Clara, now in her twenty-second year, resumed her Party work were more difficult to convince. And when the Party sent her to work among the Polish units organized by the French Army at the outbreak of war, prompted by the invasion of Poland by Germany and Russia, she barely escaped with her life when she attempted to convince several Polish comrades that this invasion, too, was necessary.

The young Clara came upon bad times. Not that she was hungry, for the Party paid her a weekly stipend, she was a veteran of the International Brigades and a full-

time Party organizer. It was bad because for the first time since she had become a member of the vanguard revolutionary party she lived with doubt. "Most human beings live with doubt all the time, but from the age of fifteen I had lived with certainty: Stalin, the Party, the Revolution. I was a hard. If I had been instructed to kill, believe me, I would have killed. Anton P. as a commissar and as a KGB agent killed and killed. I was no different from him. If I had been assigned to kill, I would have killed. Now I was confronted with doubt and I became terrified by the disorder and evil of history. You must understand, that is the fatal flaw of all true believers—this fear—for if they cannot control it, they perish. Yet, it is also their strength as true believers, for if they learn to control it—conceal it—they can go on lying, murdering, drowning their fear in blood. As Philip Rahv, your fellow American wrote, the mind of a true believer must flee from the brutal choices which life and history so frequently impose. It fights to protect its own illusions and to escape the knowledge of its own gullibility and chronic refusal of reality.

"Now I was struck by doubt and began to waste away as if overcome by anemia. It seemed I could not live without certainty. I realized I was a coward. It is easier to face physical danger than to face the seemingly simple fact that your icon is a fraud, hollow, a piece of tin. The flesh of my body melted away; I became afraid of the dark; I concealed myself in my rooms. I thought I was dying. Still, I wasn't quite ready to die, so I found my own cure in the way those poor souls, narcotic addicts, cure their despair, their emptiness: they buy a gram. I bought certainty. It cost me quite a bit. My revolutionary

honor. I told myself the notion that moral ideals should be put before the forces of history was anathema to a revolutionary. I told myself it didn't matter that Stalin shook Hitler's hand after so many comrades had died in Spain fighting fascism, after he had killed so many comrades in Russia for alleged fascism. I told myself it didn't matter that the German underground, which had also lost so many in its struggle against Hitler, had suddenly been told to cease and desist, in effect, to make a popular front with Nazis. Politics is merely a matter of taste, Molotov is reported to have said. It was trying to make a rationale for the alliance and for the invasion of Poland which had sickened me. Now I no longer needed one because it didn't matter. Aesthetically I preferred the hammer and sickle to the swastika, therefore I would be a Communist —in that way I could at least tell myself I had not wasted my life, short as it may have been. Yes, my certainty would be a sham, a lie, but better the pretense of certainty than the certain horror of doubt.

"I began to gain weight, my arms became round again, energy returned. An elderly comrade at *l'Humanité,* where I worked on occasion doing translating, said to me one day, 'Clara, you have grown up.' He was a famous writer, had as they say very good eyes. Yes, I had grown up. I had become cynical. Now any abomination or atrocity could be committed in the name of my revolution and I could pass it off with a toss of the head. I was now safely in the stream of history."

When the Germans invaded France, approached Paris, Clara was directed by the Party to join the retreat and escape via Saint-Nazaire to England. In London Clara obtained work with the Polish Government in Exile,

translating state papers. "I lied to them, of course, pretended I was a Polish patriot. I was a spy." Twice weekly she surreptitiously passed important information to an English member of the Party underground. When Germany invaded Russia, instead of gloom, she felt elated. The world had righted itself, she was again fighting fascism.

In early 1943, Clara Z. disappeared from London. Without a trace. "There were ways," she now said with a grim smile.

A young, blue-eyed blond woman named Anna Maria Stuhlmann moved into a small house near the Hamburg harbor with her recently married husband, Herr Gottfried Stuhlmann, Nazi official attached to the German Merchant Marine.

Herr Stuhlmann, a man who took his work seriously, never left his office at the Harbor Master's in the evening without a briefcase full of papers. After his evening repast with his lovely young wife, he would sit at his desk behind the blacked-out windows, reading aloud from his charts the scheduled arrival and departure of every vessel plying its trade in the German controlled North Sea. Herr Stuhlmann read slowly since Anna Maria did not know the art of shorthand. Concluded, he would roll up his charts, return them to his briefcase, and Anna Maria would roll up the onionskin sheets on which she had noted what he had read and slip them into a slender rubber tube. Since they were among the elite, despite the shortages among the populace, there was always hot chocolate and a thick slice of bread, butter, and fruit preserve before they put out the light and went to sleep.

For whatever reason, in the first few months after their

arrival in Hamburg, Anna Maria slept in the big bed and Gottfried on a cot in the next room near the front door. Before slipping under his blankets, Gottfried always placed a loaded German Mauser on the floor near the head of the cot. Under Anna Maria's pillow rested a loaded stubnosed pistol.

In the morning, Gottfried, tall and handsome in his fresh uniform, distinguished looking with his graying hair and tanned face—he could have stepped off a Nazi poster —would eat his morning repast with Anna—of whom the same could be said—pick up his briefcase, kiss her on the cheeks, and leave for his office.

Anna Maria would then tidy up the flat, dress simply in skirt and blouse, black lisle stockings, and stubby pumps, fetch her shopping bag into which she slipped the rubber tube, and leave to do her marketing at the commissary set aside for the exclusive use of the high echelons of the bureaucracy. Every morning she took the same route along the Elbe, walking not slowly and yet not quickly. At the capstan near the small building which stood at the quay, she would stop and pass the time of day with an aged former dockworker who presided over the small structure. It was said by those who saw her on these occasions that she must be a sympathetic young woman, why else would she stop to smile and spend a few moments with the old man? She would, on one day or another, hang her shopping bag on a cleat of the capstan, remove the small mirror from her purse and puff out her blond hair disarrayed by the wind which blew in from the sea. Hair in place, mirror returned to purse, she would recapture the shopping bag, smile at the old man, and resume her route to the commissary. What the old man

did with the black tube he had filched from the shopping bag was not her concern.

The war was going badly for the Germans. Life becoming more difficult even for the elite. The SS grew more rapacious, more suspicious of everyone, even those known to be most loyal to the Cause.

One night as they sat across from one another at the table after their work in Gottfried's little study, he stared at her for a long moment, his eyes unusually troubled, his teeth gnawing at his lower lip. "We're living at the edge," he said quietly. "A sudden gust and we'll have been dislodged. Death, I hope, will be sudden."

"I understand," said Anna Maria. "We're being foolish. We might as well." She smiled softly at him; he was a decent, honorable comrade, and must be the bravest man she'd ever known.

From that night onward they slept in the same bed, he never forgetting to place his German Mauser, a beautiful hand-tooled gun, on the floor near his head.

"We won't be taken alive," he said.

"I promise you."

They had great admiration and respect for each other, and love of a sort. Only on rare occasion, passion, for their fear was constant and seemed to drain them of all other emotion.

They were extremely careful that Anna Maria not become pregnant. Perhaps because of the war, or yet perhaps the manufacturers had been so directed—German blood must be renewed—and the contraceptives were fabricated from inferior material, or, perhaps again, since no contraceptive even of the best material is foolproof, Anna Maria did conceive.

When she became certain, she informed Gottfried.

"No problem," he said. "The Harbor Master's doctor has done it for others, he will do it for us."

"Let me give it a few days," she said.

"Of course."

In the next few days Anna Maria was overcome with a despair, a melancholia which she couldn't understand. No logic, no argumentation she had with herself could dispel it. It didn't affect her work, but after she did the chores, made the drop, shopped, returned to their little stone house, she would fling herself on the bed and weep. She tried to tell herself it was loss of nerve, that they daily trod through a minefield, that the feeling would be gone in a few days, but she knew she was lying to herself. What it was was as obvious as the lack of flow of blood.

At last she had to tell Gottfried what it was.

"I'm going to have this child."

They were at dinner. Gottfried poured himself a glass of white wine. She saw that his hand trembled.

"It is difficult enough, this life—a pregnant woman, a child, will make it impossible."

"If I can't have this child, then I can't go on. It will sustain us."

As he brought the wine to his lips, the glass tipped and wine spilled on his shirt. The usually fastidious Gottfried didn't seem to notice. "Bourgeois sentimentality," he said.

"Perhaps," she acknowledged, unhappy, in despair.

He stood from the table, paced the floor, his face ashen, his lips trembling.

"Bourgeois sentimentality is dangerous for a revolutionary." Having said this, he caught hold of himself, stopped trembling, turned to face her.

Anna, seated, felt at a disadvantage, so she stood and went to stand before him, face to face. He was right, of course, and she must tell him so, but for the first time in her life she wanted something that was totally for herself, that belonged to her alone, in a sense was her very self. The child growing in her womb was hers, was her, and not even its father could deny her. Or the Revolution. Or their work. Or the war. Nothing, nothing could deny her the right to bear her child.

"You are right, Gottfried, but for whatever reason, I'll not yield up my child."

"Is it having an abortion that—?"

"No, no. I had an abortion in Spain, a good clean curettage, it didn't bother me in the least. It is not that."

He bit his lower lip, softened, said what she didn't want to hear. "I didn't realize you loved me so—"

She didn't want to hurt him and would have been pleased to tell him the lie, but in this case lying would be obscene. "No, I'm sorry, Gottfried, it's not that. It is simply—simply? What in the world is simple? It is not simple; it is complex. This child is mine, is me, and I want it!"

Gottfried peered deeply into her eyes and it was a struggle for Anna Maria not to evade their piercing blue. He was a very perceptive man. "This is hardly the time," he now said softly, "or the way, to assert your individuality, to rebel against the Party."

For the first time, really the first time, Anna Maria looked at Gottfried. How did he know? For more than eighteen years he had lived as a spy for the Party among the most vicious people the world had ever known. He'd had to be obsessed with his belief in his cause, never had a moment to assert his individuality, to rebel, for it could

have meant instant death—no, not instant, there would have been torture to go through first. That's the way they had lived now for more than a year. Living completely surrounded by danger without even thinking they'd had to force themselves into the lives of robots—follow the same routine every minute, every second, of the day and night to convince themselves that they were who they were not, live the parts, act the parts, be the parts, force themselves to forget the danger, the fear, be under constant constraint. Yes, Gottfried understood, understood better than she.

Gottfried was staring at her, waiting for her reply. His handsome face was a ghastly white and his lips trembled. Still her rebellion was so overwhelming she could not concede to him. The logic of the situation had defeated her, and her emotions ruled her.

"I'm sorry," she said. "I must have this child."

His face suddenly twisted into a grotesque mask of anger, rage, hatred, his teeth like fangs, his hands balled into fists raised above his head. She thought for a moment he was ready to beat her, kill her. Then just as suddenly with some inner strength he regained control; he unballed his fists, lowered his hands; his features rearranged themselves, and he was again the elegantly handsome Herr Gottfried Stuhlmann—what miraculous control the man had, what a horrible life he must have lived. Now that she had seen him like this, for the first time she knew him. And knowing him, knew herself the better.

"You will have to leave now," he said quietly. "Our work is too dangerous. Disappear—find your way to Switzerland."

"No, I'll not leave. I'm as committed as you are. We

are to those here man and wife; they will accept it as natural that I am pregnant. In a way it will reenforce our position."

"There are reasons," he said, turning away.

"What? Tell me?"

He wouldn't speak. Instead he strode, now his usual self, to the study. They had their night's work to do, but less and less every night since German ships were going down faster than new ones could be built. They had done their job so proficiently that at times they boasted to each other they were the equal to at least a thousand Allied planes. Their feeling of accomplishment made their mission and their lives easier.

As Anna Maria's belly enlarged, so the Allied bombings increased. Hamburg was being devastated stone by stone.

There was now less to eat even for the elite, but still there was enough for Herr Stuhlmann and his pregnant wife.

Anna Maria gave birth to a son. It was a home birth because she had refused to go to the hospital. Attending her was a midwife who had been recommended by the old dockworker who was Anna Maria's drop. "I'll not have that Nazi swine of a doctor touch me," she told Gottfried, who had again demurred. "Besides, I've heard that during the height of labor women reveal things best kept secret."

After the midwife left, Gottfried, who had been present during the birth, told Anna Maria, "You were right—when you screamed near the end you screamed in Polish and Yiddish. I didn't know you were a Jew."

"Strange," she said. "I had forgotten myself. When I

became an active member of the Party, I gave up all thought of it. Does it bother you?"

Gottfried, usually so somber, so utterly serious, laughed now as she'd never heard him laugh before. After he wiped the tears from his eyes with his handkerchief, he said, "My mother was Jewish."

"And you've worked among the Nazis for almost twenty years? You're a very brave man."

"No braver than you, my dear. My mother died when I was still a child, and my father remarried, this time to a Catholic. That is a long time ago. I am forty-five. I joined the Party in 1919, before Liebknecht and Luxemburg were murdered. In the middle twenties, when the Party asked me to join the Nazis as an agent, I did so, thinking it would merely be for a short time, that we would soon be winning our own revolution. In my youth I thought I would be an actor. History, which is our master," and he laughed—strangely, he was now more at ease than ever before—"decided to give me a great role on a monster stage. Besides, it soon became apparent to me that I'm one of those people who must live on the high wire in order to feel alive. Believe me, I enjoyed it more than one would think possible. As for my being half-Jewish, who was to know? My father is a *true* Nazi, as are my half-brothers and sisters. Father has always been proud of my role in the Nazi party. He wouldn't betray my Jewishness—only his alleged Christianity. I hate him. Now, my dear Anna, what shall we name our child?"

"A good German name," she said with a smile.

"Karl—after Karl Liebknecht, my idol as a boy."

They drank to it.

For two weeks the old midwife did the shopping, stop-

ping every day or so at the quay to pass the time of day with the old dockworker. She was his wife, as round as she was tall, with large hazel eyes and thin wispy gray hair. When she walked, it was slowly, it seemed indomitably, with all her weight behind her. "It would take a tank to stop her," Anna Maria remarked to her lover.

For lovers they had become with a sudden passion which surprised them with its depth and force. Whether in bed or out, they could not stop touching each other, clinging, kissing, whispering words of love. They were no longer robot spies. Their emotions were closer to the surface. The hidden fear constantly forced its presence upon them. But there was also great happiness. And profound sadness.

"We were alive. Real human beings. A baby to fondle, to feed. A baby who cried, who gurgled, who needed to be bathed, powdered, to giggle and be silly with. A child. A new life. Ours."

And always with the questions: Would they be found out? Would they survive the war? There was one question they did not ask.

The bombings were becoming more ferocious and they were spending more and more nights in the cellar of the stone house in which they lived. At first little Karl would scream at the wailing of the siren, the uninterrupted crackling of the antiaircraft guns, then the unholy whistling screech of the bombs, as if the universe were whining at this unnatural onslaught. One night Anna Maria noticed that the baby did not scream, merely sat quietly on her lap, a little old man's bemused smile on his face, his eyes calm. It was almost as if the child had come to some rational conclusion: Well, this is the world I live in, why make a fuss? She remembered the time she was in

Madrid during an air raid, how astounded she'd been as she threw herself to the ground to see the children continue their street games indifferent to the whistling bombs and the explosions. When a small edifice nearby was demolished, before the dust even settled, they ran to prowl about the ruins, searching perhaps for riches. Did they now wake from nightmares or had some self-protective device intervened to make them forget—to deny the ferocity of the human race? And the children in the camps, those that survived, if any, would they forget, deny what happened to them? Gottfried had told her that the final solution, the extermination of the Jews and Gypsies, was proceeding with frantic haste, almost as if the Nazis feared it wouldn't be completed before the war ended. He believed even Hitler knew defeat was imminent and that the annihilation of the Jews would be his sole victory. They did not talk further about it because they did not want to believe it and to discuss it would make it true.

Anna Maria resumed her tasks, doing the shopping and making her drop at the quay. She didn't take Karl with her in his pram even though it would facilitate the transferral of the tube and its information to the old man. "I'll not make the child a part of it," she said to Gottfried.

He merely stated the fact when he replied, "He is a part of it; he is our child."

The old midwife would come to take the baby for a stroll among the piers, to feed him and tend him while his mother did her chores.

There was less transport on the Elbe and on the canals and in the great harbor. Hamburg was half-demolished. Their work at night took Gottfried and Anna Maria a quarter of the time it formerly required.

"Our work is about over," Gottfried said one evening.

"The Red Army is at Germany's borders. The Allies are massing. An attempt has been made on Hitler's life. Failed, damn it, failed! He will fight until Germany is totally destroyed and every Jew is dead. All that's left for you and me is to survive."

"And Karl," she said.

"And Karl," he replied.

He snapped the briefcase shut; she placed their night's work in the container. He paced about.

"What is it?" she said.

He did not respond.

"Speak," she said.

He merely paced back and forth.

"We've been through this hell for nearly two years. We are man and wife. We are comrades. Speak!"

He stopped pacing, finally looked at her.

"Our instructions were to work until we believed there was nothing more to do. Then to separate and vanish. Just disappear from Hamburg. Make our separate ways to the Russian lines or to the south of France. Spain, England. We will be needed. The end of the war will signal a new beginning. I want to be alive when we seize power. I want to get off the high wire. After twenty years with the swine, I want to live among human beings. I want to know what it means to say what I please. My God, I want to live—be a free man. How can you or I make our way through a country in flames, the SS on every corner, with an infant in arms?" Now she knew what she had done to him—yes, now she knew. "You and I will perish here—and the baby, too. I feel it in my bones. Our luck has been phenomenal. The Allies are not done with Hamburg. They will put it to the torch until there's nothing left. Not even us. There, there, my dear Anna, I've said

it. We are cornered. And what a stupid irony: we will be killed by allies, not by the enemy." Now he resumed his pacing, one, two, three, four, one, two, three, four.

She sat with lowered head, hands folded on lap, waiting for him to walk it off, hoping he would walk it off. He continued to pace back and forth, back and forth. Long minutes trudged past. Finally he went to the table and poured himself a glass of wine. He drank it down with a snap, like a schnapps. Then he walked over to her, stood behind her, caressed her hair.

"I am sorry," he said.

"Sit down," she said, "so we can speak face to face." He kissed her head, then did as she requested. He waited as she constructed her plan, for it was obvious to him that was exactly what she was doing, sitting there with her eyes closed, her lips imperceptibly moving.

At last she said, her unwavering eyes looking into his, "You're right, of course. And I've been thinking the same thoughts. Other thoughts, too. Revolutionists should not love, should not have babies, should not live at all—it is too difficult—we're human after all. Afterwards I always manage to burn my hand at the stove or bump my thigh against the corner of the table. Still, I must tell you, even with the knowledge that all three of us are to die, I cannot be sorry I've had Karl. I know a fulfillment I could never believe existed, and his birth brought us together, gave us love. First I wanted him merely for myself. You I must admit didn't matter—as comrade, yes, but as father, hardly. That is changed. You know I love you, not because you are Karl's father, but for all the unsaid reasons that one loves."

"I love you, too, and I am thankful, and I've told you the many reasons frequently enough."

They both smiled and reached out to hold each other's hand.

"My papers indicate I come from Freiburg. You must obtain a safe conduct for me and Karl. Once there, I will manage to cross the border into Switzerland. A few days after I've left, you will simply disappear. We will meet after the war in Moscow, where Stalin himself will give us the medals we deserve." She waited for his response.

"Freiburg's at the other end of Germany. The trains will be under constant bombardment. It's just as dangerous as staying here. And we will be separated."

"Separated we'll have a better chance of at least one of us coming out alive. So far we've gambled and won. Our luck has been good, we must ride it out to the end."

"Freiburg to Switzerland is not a short hike. How will you manage that?"

She smiled at him. "You've told me so frequently that I am a beautiful woman—I've come to believe it."

"You wouldn't?"

"Wouldn't I though?" she said, again smiling. "And now who is guilty of bourgeois sentimentality, my dear comrade?"

He lowered his eyes. "You haven't forgotten?"

"I am cursed with a memory that never forgets."

It was agreed.

It seemed simple, but rail service from Hamburg was irregular. The station itself was now rubble. "The trains seem only to run smoothly for the transportation of Jews to the camps. It will be a few days," Gottfried said.

The few days became a week, then two. Air service was maintained only for the military. A car impossible, since Anna Maria didn't know how to drive, and even if

she did, petrol would be impossible to obtain once she was out of Hamburg. Gottfried thought of bribing the driver of a staff car, but it was too much of a risk. Bribery was a capital offense for which a man could be stood at the wall.

"We were people of proven courage and great patience," Clara Z. now said, "otherwise we should not have been given that mission and survived to that point. But now that we had decided to make a run for it, our courage began to fade and with it our patience. Our mission was at an end; we had no purpose but to run, so run we must. Perhaps our antennae had relayed a message. You understand, the sort of life Gottfried had led for so many years, and I, though for a shorter time, makes every hair on one's body an antenna. We had a multitude and each was relaying a message. Danger! Run! We had simply misread the type of danger. But run was precisely on point.

"When the courage begins to break and the patience becomes short, there's a short circuit in the wiring, and the ensuing fire makes poached eggs of the brain. I should simply have picked up Karl, walked to the quay, lifted my skirt above my knees and stepped onto the barge heading down the Elbe. Women did that every day. Anything to get away from the inferno. Having given up my favors, received one in return, I and Karl could have stepped off in the countryside and lost ourselves in the charnel house that was Germany. We should have had a much better chance. Gottfried could simply have walked away. He knew every avenue of ingress and egress that marked the map of Hamburg as well as he knew every centimeter of my body. But we had decided on a course

of action, that Karl and I would take the train. Stupidly, we waited.

"We came to our senses too late. During what was to be the last firebombing of Hamburg, the three of us huddled in the cellar two days, three days, who knows how many days? I never went to the history books to research it. I say huddled. We clung to each other, the three of us, dug our nails into each other's flesh—we were one crawling trembling mass of flesh. We stank of feces, of urine, of vomit. The earth shook endlessly and we could only beg that it open and devour us. There was no time and there was no space, there was only darkness and this crawling flesh. Our own. . . . Why should I titillate you further with this horror. The earth finally stopped shaking. There was only the thunderous crackling of flames and the falling of timber and stones. Finally, we stopped our endless trembling, merely continued to cling to one another, whispering in the gibberish of a mute trying to make himself understood.

"Karl didn't cry. I tell you he didn't cry. It was frightening that he didn't. We cried—he did not. He was a child of war. It had given him birth. Why should he cry when it roared at him?

"Sanity returned. Miraculously our cellar was intact, but it was enclosed in the rubble of the surrounding buildings. Like rats we gnawed our way out into the open. When after hours of patient labor we emerged into the city street, we escaped back into the cellar. The city was in flames, a furnace, the heat unbearable. The cellar was again a haven. We were ready to kiss each thick stone of its foundation for its refusal to yield to the apocalypse.

"When at last we did come out to stay, it seemed the

entire city had been destroyed. All that was left was a monument of rubble and smoking ash as seen from behind a scrim that hung from sky to earth and from horizon to horizon—curling, winding, stinking smoke. And from behind this scrim emerged ghostly actors. We weren't the only ones who had survived. How many did, I don't know. Let the Germans count their own dead, as I have counted mine. One thing is certain, the SS survived. They survived to the very end. Some still survive. But one need not fret, new ones will arise. Have already arisen. In a new garb with a new flag. I can mention the color of the flag, but who am I to talk?

"The harbor bureaucracy closed ranks and resumed its work. The city, what was left of it, resumed its. Heinz Bruckner, the old dockworker, and Mia, his wife, did not. They died in the flames. They had been good comrades, but Heinz Bruckner had been no angel. He had been a man of tremendous strength. During the Hamburg revolution of 1923 he had fought valiantly for the Cause. He was then in his fifties, and it was said he could kill a man with the blows of his bare fists. The '23 revolution defeated, he somehow escaped going to prison. He worked on the docks for the Party and it was said he was very brutal. He had chosen his course and no one could dissuade him from it. I use Chamfort's words as Viktor X used them: Be my brother or I will kill you.

"Is there a better line to define our century?

"In 1933, when the Party was on the run, Heinz was ordered to join the Nazis. Given specific orders. Go to the SS headquarters—they will know who you are. Tell them you are prepared to work for them as in the past you worked for us. There will be a time in the future when

the Party will need you and you will be contacted. He did as he was told, and the SS believed him. It was a victory of sorts for them, for Heinz Bruckner was well-known in Hamburg as a Party strongman. Besides, what police force, secret or open, can refuse the services of someone who is able to kill a man with his bare fists? He had not lost any of his proficiency. It hardly seemed to matter to him whose skulls he crushed with his fists—theirs or ours. When age finally eroded his strength, they pensioned him off, gave him the job on the quay.

"When Gottfried was assigned at his own request to the Harbor Master of Hamburg as political overseer—a Nazi political commissar of sorts—I was enlisted in London, and Heinz Bruckner finally received the word he'd been waiting for for ten years. He was still on course, his faith undiminished. He was a man who lived totally without doubts. To whom he passed our little black tubes, I of course don't know—it is routine that you have but one contact. Someone who plied his trade as a bargeman no doubt. Another brave man. By now you must have learned as I have that bravery is not a monopoly of any one creed or people. It is very difficult for most of us to say, that fascist is a brave man, or that Arab, or that Jew, or that German. It is an admirable trait which most of us tend to recognize and respect only among our own, especially during war. . . ."

Clara Z.'s voice had become so low, it was now very difficult to hear her. She was winding down, seemed tired, and, yet, it also seemed she had come to a bridge in her narrative she did not want to cross. Raising her voice again, this time too loudly, she said, "Why am I telling

you all this—unwinding myself into that silly little machine? And you stare at me as if you wanted to record every line of my face. Look out the window. Leave me alone!"

She was silent. The only sound in the room was the whirring of the recorder.

Then she turned her head away, caught her breath, swallowed, faced forward again, resumed speaking.

"All this because a young man named Viktor X—X for the unknown—ruled our lives for six or seven days with a Kalashnikov submachine gun. An evil man, believe me. A fellow Pole, Hlasko, wrote, 'I absolutely couldn't bear the idea that what I've said might hurt anyone.' He went to prison for writing that among other things. I thought he probably deserved it—a necessary murder of sorts. I was evil, too. I am unlearning my bad habits. It is more difficult to unlearn than to learn, but I firmly believe I will manage it before I die.

"Hlasko meant the innocent, of course. For mustn't we say things to hurt those who are cruel, who have lived without conscience, who have destroyed innocent lives? If we can't speak to hurt them, what can we do? Murder them? Yes, murder them. . . ."

Again she stopped speaking, leaned over, and from the worn briefcase withdrew Viktor's Leitz-Ordner, opened it to a previously marked page. "Here," she said, "read what Ahmed ben Hussein, Viktor X, wrote early in his heroic career. Aloud, for I had difficulty reading it because of the tears in my eyes."

• Sturdy, serene Viktor X. I'm a raging battlefield—artillery, missiles, tanks, aerial fragmentation bombs, auto-

matic handguns, search and miss, search and destroy. I screech, I scream, I howl—a wounded veteran of every stinking battle, of every won and unwon war. Everyone seems to know the answer, except me. I hem and haw, turn left, turn right, march up the middle torn in two. Two? Three, four, five. A hundred. I gather my balls in one hand, my guts in the other, and rush on. I manage. I survive. For another battle, another war. I hate myself as much as the next fool, and love myself more. I think constantly of death, yet I don't want to die. My head searches out the last sliver of sun; my eyes sparkle at the first blade of new green grass; my ears fan out at the trill of a nightingale; my heart leaps as I find an earthworm fat in the winter's thaw for my fishing hook. Hypocrite! The scream echoes in my skull. I look out at the world with angry eyes, yet I think when all I want is to feel. Sorrow, pain, anger. When I scream out with pain, all about me is silence. In the end I'll vanquish the earth laid out in a shroud, for what you can't defeat, you join. I'll be at peace then, at rest. Have the last laugh. Yeooooow! •

Now *her* howl reverberated around the room.

Again silence—only the whirring of the recorder. She leaned over and switched it off, poured out glasses of cold orange juice. The Haifan sun rising to zenith filled the room. A tear slipped down a freckled cheek. She stood and walked to stare out a window at the calm glittering Mediterranean. On a bench near the beach, sat Avram ben Itzchak, his eyes apparently closed, a newspaper folded on his thin lap. She knew he neither slept nor read his paper. He merely stared at the ancient sea with his old rheumy eyes. Thinking what thoughts? Perhaps one day he would break open his lips and like dried out walnut shells reveal shriveled blackened meat.

Shortly, Clara shrugged, sighed deeply, returned to her chair, clicked on the recorder, went on.

"Poor boy. That's what he really wanted—to be wound tight in a shroud. The certainty that is death. A young man full of doubts. Who was he? Where did he come from? The world is cruel, unjust. Not knowing how to resolve his doubt, not knowing how or being able to live with doubt, he became a revolutionist against nothing. The workers of his country have their organizations, their freedom of choice, their right to speak, to write, to organize, to change their lives, why do they need the likes of him? To kill a banker? A police chief? A Social Democrat? Right across the Elbe, if you don't mind my saying so, they can use good revolutionaries, good terrorists, to help them find their way to freedom. Why didn't he go there to do his killing? Early on when he wrote that entry he already knew his cause was shallow, hollow. . . ."

Clara paused, wet her lips, began again to speak of Anna Maria and Gottfried, stopped, perhaps she was tired, perhaps what she had to say was too much for her—she needed to recover her courage—sighed deeply, made a digression, stopped abruptly, stared directly into the writer's eyes, said in a firm voice, "Back there somewhere before I stalled for time I said that Heinz Bruckner, the old dockworker, and his wife Mia perished in the firebombings of Hamburg. They did not. It wasn't a slip of the mind—it was a lie—a lie I have so frequently told myself that I've come to believe it.

"Why does one lie?" she murmured.

Yes, why? Clara Z. took a deep breath and at last resumed her narrative.

Gottfried and Anna Maria, having with their child survived the bombings of Hamburg, decided now to give up all thought of disappearing but to wait out the war's end.

What information Gottfried still obtained, they transcribed and passed on to Heinz Bruckner. If it would help end the war one day sooner, that much the better. They had come to believe they were immortal. Of all the houses on their block facing on the river, only theirs stood. Scores and scores of thousands had perished in the flames; they remained alive. Because they were among the elite, what food that entered Hamburg was first doled out to them. Anna Maria shared their crumbs with those of her neighbors still alive. After dark, they lived by candlelight.

And as the flame of the candle flickered over their entwined bodies one night, they heard the knock on the door. It was like a pistol shot in the middle of a wedding.

They fell apart with a shudder.

Gottfried reached for the Mauser on the floor, Anna Maria for the pistol under her pillow.

"We will not be taken alive," he whispered.

"No," she said. "But the baby?"

"He will die with us," he said.

He stood behind the closed door in his robe, the gun in his hand. "Yes?"

She stood at the side, her pistol raised.

"Open the door, Herr Stuhlmann. Quickly!" It was the captain of the Hamburg SS.

The child in the next room called out, "Mutti?"

A gun roared; the lock split; the door swung open.

They both shot simultaneously. The SS captain went down, the man at his side as well. Two others stepped into view, guns spattering. Gottfried fell; the small pistol flew from Anna Maria's hand, the pain searing, but strangely no blood.

Gottfried, fortunate man, was dead. Her they took alive.

They unpeeled the thin wrapper she wore and forcibly sat her on a kitchen chair.

"My name is Clara Z_____," she said. "I am a Communist. Kill me."

They did not kill her.

"Who else?" they asked.

"Kill me," she replied.

They did not kill her. They did what has been done so frequently before and since. Were not in the least creative. Originality did not seem important at the moment.

With pliers they pulled her toe nails off. It is not easy. They twisted and turned and yanked. She fainted. They brought her to with salts of ammonia.

She saw Gottfried's dead face, eyes staring, mouth open, a fly strolling along his upper lip.

"Kill me," she said.

"Who else?" they asked.

"Kill me."

They pressed lit cigarettes to her nipples. They did it gently, otherwise the lit cigarettes would go out. She screamed. They did not gag her. They were positive the neighbors would not interfere. First one nipple, then the other.

She screamed. She fainted. They brought her to.

One carried Karl in. Tied him to a chair, facing her. They spread her legs. They pressed lit cigarettes to her vulva. She screamed. They withdrew the cigarettes. Karl began to cry. "Mutti! Mutti!" They again pressed lit cigarettes to her vulva. Again gently, otherwise they would

have to be relit. She screamed and screamed. The child fought against his bounds, crying, "Mutti! Mutti!"

"Who else?" they asked.

"Kill me," she said.

They pressed lit cigarettes to her nipples and vulva simultaneously. She fainted. They brought her to. She was now beyond pain. They were professional and understood it. They would have to be more creative, otherwise the shock which protected her against pain would kill her.

They forced her mouth open and poured brandy down her throat.

She felt pain again. "Kill me," she said.

They unbound the crying baby. Still conscious, she watched them, understood what was coming next. This is what it was Gottfried had feared most and out of deference to her and their child had refused to mention. Yes, he had known. And she herself had known, had thought about it a hundred times since Karl had been born—and perhaps even before. But her desire, her need for the baby had been so great that she had forced it from her mind. Now it had come true.

They clasped the baby by his ankles and raised him overhead as one does a club.

"Who else—or we smash his head," they said.

"Put him down," she whispered.

They put him down.

"Strap him into his pram," she said.

They did as she requested.

Karl stopped screaming. He was curiously calm, his blue eyes merely querulous, trying to understand.

"Take him to a neighbor."

One wheeled the child out, and she could hear the wheels going down the steps. Thus they parted.

She stared at the dead Gottfried. "You were right," she muttered. "You were right."

Shortly the man returned.

"Now," they said.

"It was Gottfried, I, and Heinz Bruckner," she said. "Now kill me."

"Who else?"

"You know the routine. We only knew him. Now kill me."

They were too cruel to kill her.

They took her to their headquarters where daily she was brutalized and degraded. But they did not kill her. They killed Heinz Bruckner and Mia, his wife. That she knew because they were beaten and killed in front of her eyes. Then she knew nothing.

"Not madness, but chaos. Madness is unbearable, because there are intervening moments of sanity. I was more fortunate. My brain was a wild montage of unrecognizable images—my body was numb. At least I think so, for I remember nothing. Later came madness, when the images in my brain began to sort themselves out and there would be moments of sanity when I would remember and the pain would be so great that I would go mad again. I was no longer numb then, and I would scream, Kill me! Kill me!"

Clara Z. was released from hospital in London in early 1947. She was awarded the Red Banner of Lenin by the Soviet government, the Victoria Cross by the British, and the Cross of St. Stanislaus by the Polish Government in

Exile. When the Lublin (Communist) government took power in Poland, she was named their maritime representative in London and negotiated the return of all Polish merchant and naval vessels in British harbors.

Shortly thereafter she herself returned to Poland and was immediately named Deputy Assistant Harbor Master for the Ports of Gdynia and Gdansk. She did not marry and her sole friendship was with Anton P. who had risen high in the secret police in Warsaw.

Through him, she instituted a search for Karl. "There were thousands upon thousands of blue-eyed blond-haired boys in Germany, hundreds in Hamburg, without parent or family. The chances are some couple, childless, took him up and reared him as their own. Why should they come forward—even if they knew he was the child Anton's agents were seeking?"

Anton wished to marry her and for a short time she thought she would. "But, no," she said to him, "it would merely be a marriage of convenience. I have no love for you and you have none for me. At any rate, I prefer to live alone. I shall never sleep with a man again."

He was satisfied, probably relieved, with her answer. His short-lived love affair with her in Sitges had been an eccentric interlude in his long life as a Party functionary. There had never been a woman before her, and there never would be again. He lived only for his Party work. And now she did, too.

"For twenty years, I awoke in the morning, did my ablutions, dressed, ate my breakfast, walked or was driven to my desk. Did my work. Went to meetings. I had no personal life. I survived. Half-dead, but survived. When comrades of the International Brigades in Poland

and in other People's Democracies were imprisoned or killed, I remained silent. If they, why not I? We had planted rotten fruit, now we were eating it. To rephrase an old adage, the more it changed, the worse it became. When I finally came to realize it had all been a fairy tale written by an evil witch, like most other people on earth I learned I also could live with doubt, with ambiguity. At long last I had become an adult. Yes, it had taken a lifetime.

"When Stalin died, I gave a little party. The guest myself. When the workers of Poznan revolted, I prayed they would win. Incurable, I still hope—perhaps, perhaps. . . ."

There were numerous changes in the Polish Party and government, but then there always are. Still, nothing seemed to touch Clara, she did her work efficiently, followed the line, looked the other way, never raised her voice, did as she was told. A perfect comrade. She survived.

"It was probably Anton. I've never asked, and he's never said."

She was silent for a moment, wet her upper lip with the tip of her tongue, said quietly, "I survived, but with me always was a secret pain, the cause of which I refused to acknowledge, hid from myself, except on rare occasions, at the strangest moments. It could be anywhere, at any time, in or out of sleep, at work, at dinner table, at a conference surrounded by thousands of people—suddenly the lids of my eyes would close, and looking inward I would dare a furtive glance deeply into the shadows and would see it there enveloped in itself. The pain would be so great that I would wish to die then and there and

with fright I would quickly shut the cause of my pain away again. . . . Is it only I who carry this pain inside me? Do others suffer it? . . . It is not only I? Yes, I suppose so—why should I think that I am unique? Yes, yes, it is the pain of being alive and knowing . . . knowing the graves—those marked and those unmarked. . . ."

And she was silent again, only the whisper of the tape in the silence, and in the sunbeams the motes danced frantically. . . .

"We must go on," she sighed. "We are approaching the end of my saga. So I lived the life of a perfect comrade. I was a dreckfresser. Did David tell you about the Shiteater, the great György Lukács? Good, I'm glad. We were friends, you know. Discussed books, never politics. It was too dangerous. . . . Well, let me conclude. . . ."

In the fall of 1968, like Anton, Clara Z. was called into the Party District office in Gdynia, and there the Party secretary asked her, "How many Polish workers do you supervise?"

"About 14,000 maritime and clerical workers," she replied.

The secretary became angry with her for using industrial classifications in her response.

"Do you think it is right for honest Polish workers to work under a Jew?"

Clara Z., at one time known as Anna Maria Stuhlmann, did not argue. She returned to her apartment, packed a small bag and was on the next boat to Sweden. "I had to leave my Jewish gold behind," she now said with a smile.

From Sweden, Clara Z. flew to Israel. "My old comrades had taught me what not even Hitler could: that I was a Jew."

Because of her maritime experience, she obtained work with the Harbor Master of the Port of Haifa. She now speaks Hebrew with the ease and facility with which she speaks some ten other languages.

Clara Z. was calm as she sat at her desk. The Haifan sun now white-hot in the early afternoon pouring through the windows struck at her eyes and she shielded them with an upraised hand. She had said more than she had wished to say, but was not unhappy. It is good, she said, to bring to light what has long lain in shadow, hidden, cramped in one's private corners.

She sat waiting for the obvious question, but it did not come. She would have to decide for herself whether to answer the unasked. It was the least that could be allowed her.

The silence was long. The sun was hot and blinding. She lowered her hand from her eyes and permitted the sun to punish her. It revealed her age, the scars of time, of her life. She was a sixty-year-old woman who had enlisted in a formidable quest and had lost. She now looked defeated, but still one knew she would not go down, not for a while yet.

At last she said, "One final word. Viktor Frankel and Karl, the son of Gottfried Stuhlmann and Clara Z., are not one and the same. You must believe me. Avram made a thorough search and investigation. There is no more efficient secret police than theirs. Even Israeli. You know that. The result was negative. Avram wouldn't have lied to me—even to protect me. He is a man of little sentiment. None of that nonsense about letting the parent and the child be. He would have told me the truth. You must believe it. You simply must. I myself couldn't go to

Hamburg, I couldn't. When Gottfried and Anna Maria Stulhmann died, their baby died with them. That was the end of the mission. The end of the line. The end of it, the end of it. I insist that you believe me. I insist! You may go and ask Avram. . . .

"You believe me? You do? Thank you . . . you are a dear man. Yes, thank you. . . .

"Enough?"

Yes, enough.

THE YOUNG ONES

Viktor and Gabriele

• DEATH IS LIFE.

The Few, representing the Many, become the Many.

A guerrilla fighter slays his enemy.

In the act of pure violence there is a double act of liberation: the victim has been freed from his false role, the victor has freed his own spirit for authentic manhood. (I am both Viktim and Viktor.)

(Have quoted the above from a British magazine which I've been reading to refresh my English. The author has written with ironic indignation, but since buried deep in his brain he's aware he will one day be a victim of the Revolution, he has unconsciously written the truth.)

Plan Israel is the most explosively electrifying militant action we have yet plotted—and against the only enemy who understands us, thus the most dangerous. Haddad, Gabriele, Max Gruber, and I have designed it.

Gruber, a trained entomologist, has reviewed it with scien-

tific eyes. When he sits at a planning table, his muscles relaxed, he's wholly different from the brute he is when he attacks physically. He studied our plan in the way he would an anthill and came away with a smile of delight at its perfection. Simple, straightforward, its success assured since it is double-pronged: the release of our imprisoned comrades in West Germany, Israel, France, and Switzerland or the death of at least one hundred Israeli Jews.

Haddad, through one of his agents in Israel, has obtained the passenger list of the shuttle flight from Tel Aviv to Paris which we intend to hijack. We want to familiarize ourselves with their names and destinations. Of the two hundred some odd passengers, eighty-three are Israelis and twenty are dual citizens of Israel and France. The crew numbers twelve.

Haddad's agent has done his work well, for in addition to the above information he has included *vitae* of two Israelis, a woman named Deborah Gershon and a man named Avram ben Itzchak, plus one Amerikan Jew named David Grad. He thinks these three will bear watching, for his belief is that they might very well be Israeli intelligence agents who will be carrying arms. As an aside he notes, patronizingly, I think, that the West German comrades must be made to understand that Israeli counter-terrorist agents aren't as easily dealt with as those of West Germany, France, or the United States. I informed Haddad that we're well aware of it. He smiled—Haddad is so suave, so polite, so very darkly handsome (how much like Alex he looks)—and said, correctly I must admit, that his agent was doing the job he was supposed to do. I congratulated him, smiling as suavely, as handsomely as he.

The *vitae* are fascinating.

Avram ben Itzchak, also known as Anton P., had been a Russian-Polish KGB agent for many years, had defected to the West, and then to Israel, some seven years ago. However, he has kept his counsel private so far as the KGB knows, otherwise he would of course be dead. He's in his seventies and gives the appearance of a harmless old man—probably a pretense.

Deborah Gershon, also known as Clara Z., had been a

Polish Communist Party organizer and underground worker for many years, had been the Deputy Harbor Master of Gdynia and Gdansk, and had also defected to Israel some seven years before. At present she's consultant to the Harbor Master of Haifa. Is known to speak ten languages, including German and Arabic. (It is rumored she worked underground for the Allies in Hamburg during the war, but never verified and probably false.) Alert, forceful, for a woman in her early sixties she is reported to be quite beautiful.

David Grad, the Amerikan, had been a Communist Party organizer in the merchant marine and in the Amerikan South in 1930s—not an undangerous assignment—had fought both as a member of the International Brigades and as a tankist with the Russians in the Spanish Civil War, also acted as interpreter for the Russian generals in that war. Was born in Russia and migrated with his parents to the United States in the early 1920s. He fought as a tankist with a Canadian armoured regiment in WWII for five years. He defected from the Communist Cause after his return from Spain. He is an intractable enemy of the World Communist Movement. Also speaks ten languages, but not Arabic. About the same age as Clara Z. Still tough, burly. Is known to be a friend of Clara Z. and Anton P. With them he is ostensibly taking a holiday trip to Paris.

Three old revolutionaries, not of the sort I would join in common cause, but still people who'd risked their lives for the Revolution. In the end they defected to the imperialist camp. Was Khrushchev perhaps right when he said Jews are Jews: independent, contentious, all brothers under the skin?

We decided in conference that though they were old, their pasts indicated they should bear extraordinary watching, their hand luggage, as well as that of all passengers, examined for arms, and all three would be shot at the first intimation of intractability of one or all.

Plan Israel:

The weekly Tel Aviv-Paris air shuttle lifts off at Ben-Gurion Airport approximately 8:50 a.m. on Sunday. All the

passengers will have undergone a strong security check, except Israeli agents, if any. The jetliner will arrive in Athens before noon.

In Athens the security checks are lax.

Max Gruber left today for Ankara where he will join three comrades of the Palestine Front for the Liberation of Palestine. Sunday morning, disguised as tourists on their way to Paris, they will take a flight to Athens, then await transfer to the Paris shuttle.

Tomorrow Gabriele and I will fly to Bahrain, an island in the Persian Gulf. On Sunday morning, also dressed as tourists, we will return to Athens by air and transfer to the Paris shuttle.

The hand luggage of those comrades involved will contain handguns, hand grenades, and cans with fuses.

Gabriele and I will be ticketed First Class. Max and his group will be ticketed Economy.

The air shuttle is scheduled for takeoff for Paris at 12:25 p.m. In ten minutes the jetliner should be banking westward over the Gulf of Corinth. While the "Fasten Seat Belts" sign is still on, Max and his Arab comrades will aim guns and grenades at the stewardesses and pursers and order all passengers to place their hands behind their heads and remain silent.

Simultaneously, Gabriele and I will draw our guns and grenades. I will push into the pilot's cabin and instruct the captain to head the plane for Destination Friend for refueling. I will then inform the passengers on the public address system, speaking in English, that my name is Ahmed ben Hussein of the West Bank city of Jericho, and if they place their hands behind their heads and remain silent no one will be injured.

I will also inform the passengers and crew they are now the guests of the Arab and World Revolution, adding a denunciation of Israel as the oppressor of the Palestinian people.

At this point, Max will order all passengers in Economy forward to the First Class section. It will be crowded, but there will be enough room for all if they sit in the aisles.

The Arab comrades will then open and examine the passengers' hand luggage for arms, beginning with that of the three traitors to the Revolution.

Gabriele will proceed to call the women passengers to the front of the plane where she will frisk them for weapons. As she does, Max and I will stand guard. Max will then do the same for the men as Gabriele and I stand guard. (Max has been instructed to be brisk, and to avoid unnecessary roughness.)

This entire procedure should be terminated by the time we land at Destination Friend at approximately 3:00 p.m.

The passengers will already be back in their assigned seats, having been ordered by Max Gruber whose English is more than adequate, to sit with their hands behind heads and in silence.

Upon landing, the three Arab comrades will tie tin cans with fuses to the exit doors, and the passengers will be informed by Max and myself that the cans contain explosives which will detonate the moment a door is touched. (The cans will in fact contain figs and dates, which will be served to the passengers when flight is resumed to Final Destination. This is a joke I Suck Kampfmann will appreciate when I relate it to him.)

At Destination Friend we expect there will already have been an attempt by one or another consular officer to contact the native authorities for possible negotiation. This will be refused. However, we expect this will take several hours. The stewardesses will be allowed to feed the passengers while we await permission to leave by friendly authorities.

Before takeoff I will advise the pilot to fly to Final Destination.

Sometime during the night we should arrive at Final Destination. The passengers will be ordered to lower window shades. We will be met by Khouri and five of his comrades who will relieve the first team for the night.

On Monday, Haddad will begin negotiations with Israel for the release of all guerrillas in their prisons, as well as our comrades in Stuttgart-Stammheim, and those held by France

and Switzerland. The Israeli government will be held responsible for the release of *all,* no matter in what country, or the hostages will be killed. Since there will be citizens from other countries on board, we expect their governments to bend Israeli arms to breaking point.

Alternative 1. Should the Israeli government, and through it the Federal Republic, France, and Switzerland, refuse our demands, the hostages will be divided into two groups: non-Israeli and Israeli. The non-Israeli group will be released and the Israeli group held. This, we believe, will indicate to the Israeli government that we are not bluffing. That it smells of the extermination camp lineups will have its own profound meaning for the Jews. (I don't use the euphemism Zionists. I leave that fakery to the politicians. A Jew is a Jew.)

Alternative 2. Should the negotiations become protracted, we will kill one of every five Israeli citizens. 20 the first round.

Alternative 3. Second day, one of four. 20 the second round.

Alternative 4. Third day, one of three. 20 the third round.

Alternative 5. Fourth day, one of two. 20 the fourth round.

Alternative 6. Fifth day, the remaining but three. 20 the fifth round.

The remaining three will be released to attest to the fact that we treated with them honorably.

Photographs will be taken of the executions and forwarded to the world press after each day's shootings.

Our aim is primarily the release of our comrades. We will only kill if we are forced to. We are not motivated by an irrational hatred of Jews.

Conclusion: Subjective, so-called human, considerations have become extinct.

Now that Max and Haddad have left, only Gabriele and I remain in the rented flat.

Earlier, we sat on the sofa. The sun had gone down, and

we didn't put on the lights. In the near distance, in shadow, atop the Acropolis stand the ruins of the Parthenon, an apt symbol of democracy, of Western civilization. Gabriele, I could see, was nervous, tense, which was unusual as she is customarily the coolest of us all in anticipation of an action. I was myself. Calm. I do what I must do. For all else is left behind and forgotten.

I asked her why she was nervous, and she said the Israelis were not like the others—their agents were among the wiliest in the world, and they were implacable. "I'm afraid."

I told her that I didn't want to die either, there was still so much to be won, and though we were young, we had been close to death before and had escaped, and would again. The action we planned was foolproof. Once we reached Destination Friend we would always be among friends until the negotiations were over. Of course, when we returned to the Federal Republic, it would again be dangerous for us, but after all that was the life we had chosen. "Our careers," I said with irony.

"You needn't worry—I won't come down with the flu." I could see in the semi-darkness that she was smiling. Her split lip had healed and was only slightly puffy.

"You insist," I said this time calmly, "that I faked the illness before *Kristallnacht* II."

"Not consciously, you didn't. Your fever was truly high, and the stink you left in the toilet from your diarrhea was a horror, but the idea that your parents were Jewish still nags at you subconsciously, and it made you ill."

"Amateur Freud," I said, but not sharply. "Here it is thirty-six hours before our action and I'm not ill—scared, yes, but not ill."

"We might have to kill Jews, how will you feel then?"

"If I fail or falter, you'll shoot me. We've all agreed to that. This isn't a sporting event, it's a war."

"I couldn't kill you, Viktor—agreement or not. I still love you, you know that."

I took her hand in mine, her dark, somber mood had

quite overtaken me as well. "What do you think of our plan —really deep inside?" Gabriele is a superb organizer, and I trust her analytical mind without the slightest reserve.

"On paper, excellent. But plans are made to fail. Who knows what the Israelis will do? They might say, kill them all, we won't concede, and we'll have to kill them. Then their agents will hunt us until everyone of us is dead. In a recent poll, when Israeli officials were asked whether if kidnapped they would prefer to be ransomed or risk being killed, every one of them answered they would rather risk being killed. Of all the West German officials asked the same question, none answered. Abstained. That's the difference."

"This will mean life or death for over a hundred of their citizens—not officials, except perhaps those three old Communists. Families, friends will be screaming at the government to concede. It will be different."

"Let's hope so."

The darkness had deepened, in the near distance lights hovered over the elegant ruins, and we remained silent for a time, merely holding hands.

She turned to me and I could only see the glisten of her eyes. "Promise me, Viktor, if it gets fouled up, you won't let them take me prisoner, that we will fight to the death as Alex and Helga did. Prison would be a living death. It frightens me more than anything else."

"Me too. In Marseilles when I was a seaman, I saw a wild falcon caged. It kept flying against the bars until it broke its wings, and then, unable to fly, screeching with rage, it threw its body at the bars again and again. It was pitiful. I think I'd go mad. . . . Look, we have the night, let's pretend we're normal human beings, tourists, dress up, go to Syntagma Square and eat at a decent restaurant, then return to the Plaka and go dancing, have some fun."

"Do you know how, Viktor?"

"Paris showed you I could—and those few weeks in Hanover. It's too bad we haven't been able to live in peace, we two. There's been no one for me but you, but the only way

I could find any inner peace was to live chastely, married to—"

"I know you won't believe me, but since Hanover I've lived chastely, too."

"Don't lie."

"Last week, after you struck me, I started with Max Gruber—that brute, bland as potato soup—I couldn't bear it. I stopped. I'm now as chaste as you."

We were quiet again—she no doubt thinking as I was that we were both people who sought punishment for a guilt we didn't understand.

Yet here we were speaking quietly to each other, were at peace with each other again, and I wondered should the plan for some reason be delayed or put off tomorrow, could we find that idyllic interlude again?

Suddenly I wanted to hold her close—what possible harm could it do?—we were committed; we couldn't withdraw. Once the engine starts, it's impossible to stop—an iron law among activists. But I was afraid—of her, of myself. The last time it had been so powerful we'd thought seriously of running away. Yes, we'd spoken of it playfully, in jest, but we'd really meant it. It was dangerous, so now I used all my will to resist embracing her.

But Gabriele, who can read my mind better than she can read her own, took my head in her hands and kissed me with a breathtaking tenderness more painful than any blow she'd ever struck, and her breasts against me were like hot irons marking me for life as hers. . . .

We wanted, oh yes, we wanted and we tried with all our strength to make tender, gentle love, but it wasn't in our natures or perhaps the terror of what the morrow would bring had overcome us and we couldn't restrain ourselves—it might be for the last time. We let ourselves go as we never had before, brutally, yes, cruelly—it seemed we both wanted to die at the hand of the other, to die once and for all—and, yet, simultaneously fighting for life, to live if only for a moment. We cried out our love for each other, and the arro-

gant terrorist Gabriele Rainer wept bitter tears, and the implacable Viktor X also wept bitter tears, again like splintered glass, the tears mingling as our bloodied lips mingled, and we were one human being, until at last exhausted we slept, the lights from the ancient ruins flashing over our heads—Plan Israel forgotten, our fear forgotten, all life forgotten, except this very moment, this violent love that we have for one another.

Still as we slept, a part of my brain remained awake to hear her cry out for her father, and she did cry out, but not for him.

"Viktor! Viktor!" she cried, and I awoke speaking her name, "Gabriele," kissed her once again, and then again, and what I feared happened, I wanted to wake her and run away, escape from the life we'd chosen, to find refuge, a refuge where we could continue this crazy love of ours until we devoured each other and were truly one times one times one into infinity.

So I forced myself to slip from her soft velvet embrace, quietly trod to the desk to write this last entry before we leave on our mission in the morning. The Final Destination. Gabriele and I have set our course. We've stolen, beaten, bombed, kidnapped, killed for the Revolution. We can't turn back now. And an irony twists my heart, two ironies, and if I continue to write probably others will appear so I'd best bring this to a close.

The first: Gabriele and I initially joined the Revolution after it had been divulged that her father, whom she loved (still loves) and my foster father Kurt Frankel, whom I loved—a decent, honorable man—had both been, at one time, members of the Nazi party and so had contributed in some measure to the deaths of six million Jews, and here we are about to leave on a mission during which we might very well have to murder many Jews ourselves.

The second: Is it possible now that we're about to embark on this mission which could bring us to our deaths that we have at last come to the realization that we can't live with-

out love, without our strange, and perhaps to some our monstrous, love? Is it possible that what we want most is to kill each other in the name of love, so instead we've killed and will kill again in the name of what we both say we believe is the greatest cause on earth?

The truth: I believe; I don't think Gabriele believes. It was a game she got caught in, but once caught up in it, momentum carried her on and she could never find the courage or the will to quit the game.

There is one certainty: We're both aware of and so fear our own violence against ourselves that to escape it we've transformed it into an external violence against established society.

I close this account now with the hope I'll return to it, for I don't want to die. (Is that true?)

Tomorrow morning I'll send this journal to Molli Wenders, comrade and friend. When we meet again, he'll return it to me. If I don't return, he'll incorporate it into his. Together they should make an honest record of our lives and time: the beginning of the end of what is laughingly called civilized society. . . .

I want to close my account book, but somehow I can't. It's like standing at the door after having visited with an old dear friend with whom one has had a marvelous evening, and one talks and talks and talks and talks, until laughingly one sits down again, has another beer, and resumes where one's left off. . . .

I'm suddenly overcome with a terrifying sadness. . . . Who were my parents? From what were they fleeing to have abandoned me? Was it death? Was it to save my life? Was it Hitler's black Dobermans who were after them? The SS? Were they killed in the bombings and some survivor found me, had to flee himself and left me for someone else to find? Somebody once said it might have been a dockworker because the wide belt which lashed the pram to the capstan was of the sort they use, black with sweat and strain. Another person once said I was the offspring of a son of Heinz

Bruckner and his wife, an old couple who lived near the waterfront, he a former dockworker who tended the quay where I was found. They had vanished, no one knew where. Once an investigator came to our flat and spoke to Ilka and Kurt, making an inquiry about me. He wanted to take a photograph of me, but Kurt and Ilka refused, saying, "You bring a picture first." People were out searching for lost children all over Germany. Mostly Jews, of course. Ilka and Kurt weren't about to give me up to some unknown. I remember it distinctly. It was before I could speak or while I still refused to speak for whatever reason. But I could understand. I was already four or five years old.

I visualize my mother and father to have been very handsome, for isn't it said that I am? I'm sitting on a highchair crying because this man and woman are quarreling. Their faces are indiscernible.

I'll never know. Now, I'll never know.

I do the best I can. I fill in their blank faces with the bruised faces of Gabriele and myself. •

PLAN ISRAEL WAS FOOLPROOF.

As planned, the hijacked air shuttle landed at Final Destination in early morning. Timed almost to the minute. No untoward incidents.

Viktor X was congratulated by his comrades, and he in turn congratulated them.

They were greeted by their second team, which it turned out consisted of the somber Khouri, four of his Arab comrades, and one South American, Jaime Valdés, a comrade of the renowned Carlos the Jackal. Valdés, thin, bony, sharp, dressed in black, resembled a barber's straightedged razor which when unfolded can slit your

eye in half by merely looking at it. Khouri, like Max Gruber, was built like a weightlifter, no neck showing between body and head. His face and head were covered with a mass of unruly black hair, his dark eyes discernible only because they reflected somber light night or day.

The twelve terrorists herded the two hundred some odd hostages, all tired, many intimidated, into an old barracks on the outskirts of the airfield, doled out old mattresses, set up a guard, and the first team headed by Viktor X trooped up to the second floor, where they showered, had a bite, and went to sleep.

Thereafter, the guard was changed every four hours.

Deborah Gershon, Avram ben Itzchak always at her side, and David Grad, the American, seemingly without conscious effort became the spokesmen for the hostages.

Haddad, in the meantime, began his negotiations with the Israeli government.

The designated official for the Israelis informed Haddad that he would have to confer with the other governments involved and then would get back to him. Haddad agreed, advising him that he must have an affirmative answer within four days, otherwise the hostages would be shot. He spoke quietly, with no rancor. The Israeli said he understood, speaking just as quietly, and also without rancor.

On Thursday, the fourth day, the Israeli contacted Haddad, and informed him that all parties were amenable, but it would require two days longer to work out the details. Since the second day would fall on the Sabbath, would Sunday do? Haddad, a pious man himself, agreed, again warning the Israeli that Sunday would be the longest they would wait, and that the executions

would begin on Monday morning at 5:00 a.m., almost a week to the hour of the arrival of the hijacked jetliner at Final Destination. Again Haddad spoke quietly, with no show of animosity. And the Israeli responded in kind; he understood and he was positive agreement and details would be concluded on Sunday and then they could all go to sleep. Haddad laughed, joined by the Israeli.

When Haddad advised the hijackers that he had made this concession, Gabriele Rainer said it was a trick and they should commence executions on Thursday morning as planned. Max Gruber and the South American comrade agreed with Gabriele and insisted they start oiling their guns.

Viktor X reminded them that the plan called for separating the Israeli hostages from non-Israeli, which would emphatically inform the Israelis they weren't bluffing—they should go forward as planned.

Gabriele said the plan be damned, she smelled a trick, and plans were made to be changed.

Haddad informed her that the families and friends of the Israeli hostages were demonstrating and panicking the Israeli government, that thus far Viktor had been proven right in every respect. He and his Arab comrades voted with Viktor in a democratic show of hands, and that was it.

That day, Israeli was separated from non-Israeli. The American, Grad, became irate at the segregation and was closer to being shot than he would ever know, even though he was pleased to be counted among the Israelis. Deborah Gershon ordered him to shut up, and herself spoke to Viktor X in German in a quiet yet firm voice. The separation continued as planned, and the non-Israelis, over one hundred, were flown to France.

On Sunday, at the appointed hour, the Israeli spokesman contacted Haddad and informed him that as a show of good faith the Israeli government had released five Arab terrorists and asked for one more day to complete the details. When Haddad hesitated, the Israeli said, "You know the country's in an uproar and we have to let it sink into the heads of the diehards in the Knesset that if they don't concede they will have a revolution on their hands. You really have us by the short hairs this time." And he laughed. Haddad could only join him; he understood the man's problems—he'd had to deal with unruly diehards himself in his time.

"As soon as your release of the five is confirmed, I'll pass word to my comrades to hold off. But tomorrow, no longer."

"Understood."

When Haddad informed Viktor X and the others of his agreement to hold off one day more, the argument on the second floor of the old barracks could be heard by the hostages down below. It was apparent to them their fate depended on its outcome.

This time Gabriele Rainer, Jaime Valdés and Max Gruber won over the eight Arab comrades, only Viktor and Haddad holding out. The majority decided the execution of the first twenty hostages would begin at 5:00 a.m. Monday morning unless before then the Israeli government and the other countries involved released all the terrorists in their prisons. Max Gruber and the victorious Gabriele began to ready the guns.

Haddad immediately called the Israeli spokesman and informed him of the decision. "Four thirty, that's the deadline."

"There'll be no dead. Our agreement with you will be terminated by four thirty. That's a promise."

"Fine," Haddad said. "I take you at your word. It's been a pleasure dealing with you."

"Same here."

At 11:50 p.m., Viktor, Jaime and four Arabs were relieved of guard duty by Gabriele, Max, Khouri, and three other Arabs. As Viktor passed her without a word, Gabriele Rainer said to him, "We're to be relieved at four. We'll take the first seventeen we lay our hands on, plus those three old friends of yours, and shoot them against the back wall." Viktor didn't respond.

He wearily climbed the stairs, grabbed a cup of coffee as the others flopped into their cots.

In the distance he could hear planes making their approach to the new airfield. Outside the window, the tower light swept past. He couldn't sleep, so he stood from his cot and, gun close at hand, sat at a dilapidated desk in the corner. Rummaging through its drawers, he found an old pad with jottings of arrivals and departures, flipped through it and saw there were several clean pages. He withdrew his pen from his shirt pocket and sat down. . . .

• An old habit—having no one to speak to, I must speak to myself.

As during the last night in Athens, I am overcome by a terrifying sadness. The old memory keeps recurring. I am sitting on a highchair crying while my mother and father quarrel. I keep thinking of them wondering who they were, why they abandoned me. Were they cowardly? Brave? Were they Jews? Why, why did they leave me? It overcomes me. Makes me tremble. My hands shake. I have the flu, goddamn it, the flu! . . . •

He stopped writing, read what he had written, in anger slashed heavy lines through the words to obliterate them, wrote over them in large letters, *Self pity!* With effort he caught hold of himself, steadied his hand, resumed. . . .

• Gabriele's become impossible. Max's brutality rouses hers, which bounces back to his, which heightens his further, which in turn rouses hers even more until now both are overwrought volcanos. They can't wait to kill and in a few hours they will. Khouri's no better. And Valdés is worst of all. He said he will join them on the killing squad. Kill, kill, kill is all they've been saying for days now. Still, wild dogs that they've all become, their animal instincts are probably more acute than mine, and they are probably right—the Jews are tricking us. And what will be done must be done. In a few hours it will begin.

It was those three old ones who set Gabriele off. If Haddad and I hadn't been able to convince the others, she and Max would have begun killing on Thursday, or Friday at the latest. Those damned three—it was almost as if they'd planned it, working on me—that woman wouldn't keep her eyes off me, and then knew exactly when to stop. Even Gabriele ceased her eternal nagging that we kill them right away. Not Gruber. They call him the Brute. I've heard them.

Damn them! Their fearlessness somehow made me remember my humanity, made me forget my single-mindedness, softened my heart. What's a terrorist with a soft heart? Nothing! A void! A piece of shit. Pure shit!

In a few hours they're going to die. I've killed others, why should I care about them? To me the others were faceless enemies—one shoots, they fall. Faceless faces bury them and weep.

It's almost as if I were proud of these three, proud to see human beings who can rise above the degradation to which we have put them. The woman astounds me—her quiet voice, the clarity of her eyes as she speaks or looks at me.

It could be said I've become infatuated with her—and she's sixty years old! To me she seems ageless. Her beauty even at that age makes Gabriele look like a bitter old woman. No wonder Gabriele's jealous. I hope, I pray, the Israelis call Haddad soon and the entire thing's over with. Even then Gabriele and Max Gruber said they'd kill the three—my old friends, she calls them. I feel as if they are. The same old embrace of the viktor with the viktim.

Goddamn them! Why do they intervene between me and my image of myself as the archangel of the Revolution, bloodied sword in hand?

When the old KGB agent looks at me it seems he can read my mind. And she—that she can read my heart. I was tempted to ask her, almost did ask her, only discipline prevented me—one must never speak to a hostage unless it's to give an order, otherwise, well, otherwise—but I wanted to ask her if the rumor were true, that she'd worked underground against Hitler during the war, and in Hamburg, and where did she live and how, did she have any children, and how did she escape? I wanted to know all about her. Why? I don't know why. I just wanted to know. Damn her! Damn them! The Amerikan Grad can't hide his contempt. It's almost as if he says, "You're scum." Strangely, his contempt is contagious. Yes, Gabriele's right. "You've got the flu again, Viktor, haven't you?" mimicking my every word, my every move. I hate her! I hate myself! It's they, the old ones. Old tired revolutionaries. Tired of the violence, the chaos, the killings, of the treacheries—those they committed, those committed against them. The old must die so that the young do not have to see their eyes—only then can the young go on. Yes, they must die! I agree with Max and Gabriele, even if we let the others go •

Viktor stopped writing, placed a hand on his gun. He thought he heard an unfamiliar sound. The planes had already landed. The tower light kept sweeping over the

field. He listened, heard nothing unusual. Mosquitos buzzed. Flies droned. Behind him, his comrades slept. Down below, a sneeze, a cough. Soon twenty of them would be dead, crumpled at the foot of the wall, blood oozing. . . . Some shots in the distance. A burst, that was all. It happened every night. The local soldiers were doing their own killing. Still, instinctively, Viktor clasped his Kalashnikov with one hand as with the other he stuffed the old pad he'd been writing on into his pants pocket. His precious words, his history, his true thoughts. . . .

"VIKTOR!"

He flinched.

Automatic fire. Rifles, bazookas, hand grenades. Screaming. The old barracks trembled.

Gun in hand, Viktor ran towards the stairs. The others, roused, quickly behind him. One he noticed went to hide in the toilet. Jaime Valdés.

Viktor slammed down the stairs. The incessant firing was an endless thunderous roar. The building quivered, shook. He flung the door open. The hostages lay dishevelled on the floor. In the semi-darkness, under the red-blue night lights, they looked as if they were all dead, piles of crumpled clothes, rag dolls.

At the front of the building, Israeli commandos fanned out—a burst, a flash, a roar, down to one knee. Stood. Another burst, flash, roar, down to one knee.

Max Gruber, Khouri, the others, their backs against the wall, were shooting rapidly. Gabriele? Where's Gabriele? Right here. Lips turned down, eyes like slits, standing erect, firing burst after burst.

A sigh, "Gabriele." He ran to stand at her side, almost shielding her, his gun poised to fire.

"Kill the hostages!" she screamed, pushing him aside. "We'll hold them off."

He turned his gun on those nearby, saw the woman staring at him, seemingly oblivious to all the shooting, just staring at him, her eyes penetrating. His gun raised, he hesitated.

"You bastard!" Gabriele screamed.

Several of the hostages unaccountably struggled to their feet and were shot in the crossfire.

The commandos shouted, "Stay down! Stay down!" A burst, a flash, a roar, down to one knee. The explosions of the guns ripped eardrums.

Viktor hesitated.

A low wail, "Oh, Viktor. . . ." that was all.

As he turned to her, a commando aimed a burst at him, but he'd already gone down to kneel at her side, was feeling under her breast.

A sob, ". . . Gabriele. . . ."

The firing continued. Thunderous. Unabated. The windows shattered. The walls shook. Khouri went down, then Gruber. All in seconds.

Still on one knee, Viktor raised his gun. Again aimed it at the hostages. . . . Saw the woman still staring at him, her eyes huge, her mouth slightly open, her head slowly shaking, no . . . no . . . and he turned his gun to the commandos, squeezed out a burst.

A flash. A roar. Three bullets cut across Viktor's chest, and he was instantly dead.

Not a sound.

Gabrieleviktor. Viktorgabriele. . . .

From first shot to last had taken exactly fifty-seven seconds.

SINCE NO ONE REQUESTED THEIR BODIES OF THE LOCAL authorities, Max Gruber, Khouri, and the five other terrorists were buried in a mass grave.

At the request of the German Federal Republic, the bodies of Gabriele Rainer and Viktor X were sewn into body sacks and returned to their parents.

Gabriele Rainer Strelsin was cremated in Cannes attended only by her mother and father. The urn containing her ashes was taken to sea by her father on his yacht, the *Gabriele*. Somewhere between the continents of Europe and Africa, the urn was emptied. Martin Strelsin, a man whom his daughter had once described as one who loved power, himself, and her in that order—and no one and nothing else—wept unrestrainedly. Her mother, Margarete Strelsin, wept not at all. For her, the plague was over.

When the morticians in Hamburg undressed Viktor's body, they found the small pad among his possessions and gave it to Kurt and Ilka Frankel. After the Frankels received a note of sympathy from the Israeli government, which counted them as friends, they sent, with their own note of appreciation, a copy of Viktor's last entry for the Israeli historical archives.

Viktor was buried in Hamburg by Kurt and Ilka Frankel at a quiet funeral attended by several stalwart friends of the family.

The same evening, at dusk, they left the workers' cooperative where they lived—an old man and an old woman—and walking arm in arm, holding each other up, peering neither to the right nor to the left, they trudged slowly through several streets and then along the west bank of the Elbe. They stopped at a quay, stood

for a few moments wordlessly, turned about, and headed back.

They wore black mourning bands on their coat sleeves. They stared straight ahead—two old faces worn down by the years, like eroded stone beaten by storm, somehow managing to survive. They had been strong once—their faces showed that—sturdy folk, but now the buffeting wind was obliterating their features, grained stone, soon there would be nothing left of them, grains of sand. They held on tightly to each other, acknowledging nothing and no one as they plodded slowly back to their home.

A house of mourning is a private place, and so it shall remain.

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